

The Fighting 36th
HISTORICAL
Quarterly

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Editorial THE KISS OF DEATH?s.org

Importing so much oil is a
danger America must avoid.

Vol. X, No. 4 Winter 1990

Published by
36th DIVISION ASSOCIATION

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POWs never



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forget war

Editorial
The Kiss of Death

Saddam Hussein's troops marched into Kuwait on August 2, 1990. Overnight America entered a conflict defined by diplomats and kings as complicating world economics and moral standards. Americans are still trying to sort it out. Many are able to reduce the Persian Gulf crises to red, white and blue. But others are wrestling with shades of gray.

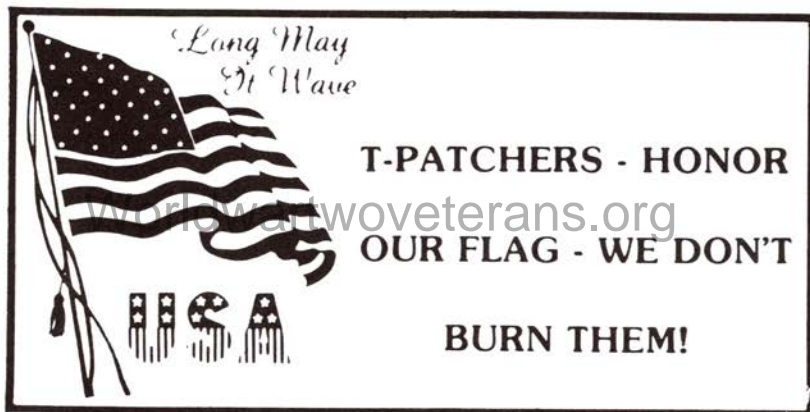
America has been wrenched, thrown from the euphoric fall of communism into the sudden threat of a desert war. Patriotism confronts history, pride meets pragmatism. Our sons, daughters, husbands and wives have been sent into a harsh land to confront an enemy whose leader defies all rules of modern civilization. Some minds in America are otherwise occupied. Iraq may have invaded Kuwait, but all that matters in the world to most Americans is that football season is about to start.

Twice in the past 17 years, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) has held the world in thrall, taking advantage of crisis in the Middle East to jack up the price of oil and hold industrialized nations as economic hostages. Today, not only has a member of OPEC challenged the morality of the world, holding hundreds of thousands of people hostage within its border, but again the American economy is being torn asunder. For what does this calamity owe its beginning? Oil. Foreign Oil. The United States Congress, the president, industry and science have had ample opportunity to resolve this energy crisis. A president once asked America to correct the problem. Industry responded by offering alternate

resources. Science showed the way by developing nuclear energy for our electrical needs, by manufacturing fuels from a bountiful coal supply, by use of natural gas, by developing fuel efficient engines. Congress responded by increasing its own salaries, by over taxing our domestic petroleum industry, by taking no action toward developing new energy sources, and in general waging a war between the two political parties our patient citizens have permitted far too long. When you begin paying \$2.00 per gallon for plain unleaded gasoline and possible that for fuel oil, thank your locally elected Senators, Representatives, and your well meaning environmentalists.

All America must begin making their wishes known. Address your congressmen in a noisy, ranting manner, a harangue, no less. Lets get action they understand. Major oil companies who prefer foreign oil must have their control of Congressmen halted. Lets halt this kiss of death.

Hicks Turner, Editor



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WWII Christmas Memory Unique

By Clarence Wood

Co. "F" - 141st Inf.



Clarence Wood
1942..... And Today

It was two days before Christmas, 1942, and all through the camp not a thing was heard but tramp, tramp, tramp. We recruits had finished our Basic Training and would soon be on our way, each wishing he could be home for Christmas Day.

This Christmas story of 47 years ago has always been a unique and wonderful experience to recall.

Basic Training at Camp Walters, Texas was finished and we were packing our gear getting ready to be shipped out for permanent assignments. We boarded a troop train at Camp Walters, Texas on a warm sunny Dec. 23, 1942. We arrived in Fort Worth, Texas, about six that evening. More soldiers and cars were to be added so we had a delay of about six hours there.

We were marched through the streets of Fort Worth to the downtown area and given permission to attend a movie by our officers. We were also instructed to muster at an area nearby after the movie. The officers then marched us in close order drill to a residential area. We did more close order drill on the wide streets of Fort Worth. Soon residents began emerging from their homes to watch us. A few at first, then a large crowd gathered.

We were called to a halt and formed in platoon groups facing the sidewalks and the people. The officers announced that since this was Christmas time we would sing Christmas Carols for all the people gathered around us.

We spent 45 minutes singing all the old familiar carols. If we didn't know all the words we would hum or whistle along. The people gave

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us enthusiastic applause. It was nearing time for us to return to our troop train but as we marched away we heard loud cheers and applause for two to three blocks.

The troop train departed. We had no idea where we were going or being sent. The officers kept singing "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas," which led us to think we might be going to a cold part of the country. We were traveling north and east.

On Christmas Day 1942 we ate breakfast in Iowa, dinner in Illinois and supper in Ohio on the troop train as it traveled across the country. On Dec. 26 we arrived at Camp Edwards, Mass., on a dark, cold and snowy night. A white Christmas it was! I was assigned to the 36th Division and awaited embarkation.

Every year at Christmas Eve I think back to that time in Forth Worth singing Christmas Carols and wonder how many of those fine boys gave their lives for their country.

Clarence A. Wood was born and educated in Marshalltown. He entered the U.S. Army in August 1942, served as a sergeant in Co. 'F', 141st Infantry, 36th Division. Discharged December 1945.

He served overseas in Africa, made the landing at Salerno, Italy, was in the bloody fighting at the Rapido River and witnessed the bombing of Monte Cassino Monastery. He received the Bronze Star and Combat Infantry Badge.

Mr. Wood was one of three brothers all serving overseas. In Italy he learned that his older brother Ralph was somewhere in the area. He received permission to find his brother, which he did after a dangerous search along the front lines.

Mr. Wood and wife, Dorothy, have been married 40 years. They have one son, John, who travels for the Chicago & North Western Railroad.

He is retired from 25 years employment on the M. St. L. and Chicago, Northwestern Railroads and 20 years as Custodial Supervisor for the Marshalltown School System. He lives at 6 S. 7th St., Apt. 2.



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143rd Infantry



ARMS SECURE PEACE

African Agenda



This Polaroid is a bit dark, but it's worthy of being added to this fine story from Ross Doughty. This was also made same time at the one with Puck ... San Antonio Reunion of 1981 - it was a FIRST for Ross. Surely everybody knows that the man on the left is Col. Oran Stovall, the Bowie Baron.



by R. K. Doughty

THE SAHARA

While undergoing training in North Africa in 1943 just before entering combat, I sought permission of my Regimental C.O. while we were near Oran, Algeria, to take the I and R Platoon to the Sahara Desert on the opposite side of the Atlas Mountains from where we were stationed. I told him that I'd set up radio relays along the way to stay in touch with the regiment in case there was need to recall us.

Part of the platoon, once we headed south, walked along a camel trail that wound its way across soaring mountain shoulders and along canyon rims, while the rest rode jeeps over rough, hilly roads through gaps in the mountains. Despite good intentions there was no way to maintain radio communications with the regiment.

Because of the possibility that the regiment and division would move out in our absence, there having been a great deal of speculation about our joining the Allied forces near Bizerte to help finish off the German Army there, our trip into the desert was cut short terminating at the very edge of that sea of sand. We saw enough of the rolling dunes to recognize how easy it would be to become disoriented and lost among them in short order. Our cursory look at the Sahara, however, left a lasting impression of timelessness, restlessness, as sands drifted in swirling patterns, and, at night, infinity under blazing stars.

I sent a patrol to make contact with the regiment post haste and to return as quickly as possible, meeting us on the road back, to let us know how things stood at the regiment. This was a fortunate move for the divi-

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sion had been alerted to move by rail to a place in the Atlas Mountains for combined infantry and artillery exercises. The I and R platoon made a forced march back to camp, arriving early on the day before the rail movement began, tired from exposure to wind and sand.

DJEBEL KHARHOUM

At the Oran freight yards from which the Division would be shipped onto the Atlas heights, I was assigned duty expediting the movement of troops by way of the dinky railroad trains composed of cars bearing the renowned legend "40 Hommes; 8 Chevaux" (40 men; 8 horses). While germs may have been discovered by a great French physician, one could only say of the transportation provided by the French Colony of Algeria that it probably contained more germs per cubic centimeter than any found elsewhere.

Complicating matters at Oran was the transshipment of thousands of Italian troops who had surrendered to the Allies as the war in North Africa drew to a close. The prisoners were in open flat cars that had been made into cages by the addition of steel mesh side curtains and roofs. Our troops had been ordered not to talk to the prisoners or to recognize them in any way.

On the second day of our movement out of Oran, I was walking down a railroad spur toward a railhead where our troops were loading when I heard an American GI on the other side of the stationary train I was passing yelling derisively at the POWs and telling them what he thought of Italians who fought against America. He spoke in English and as I swung up onto the train to get a look at him, I heard him say "You're so damned smart, Joe, where you goin' now?"

A handsome prisoners who had climbed up onto the grillwork of his cage yelled back, "We go America, Joe! Where you go?" What had started as a lesson for the Italian turned very quickly to chastisement for the GI. I spoke to him from the platform of the car over his head and startled him. "You had enough?" I asked, "or would you like some extra duty for disobedience?"

"Sorry, sir," he said. "I'll shape up!"

When it came time for my departure from Oran, I boarded one of the coaches after watching an air raid in progress along the coast. It was just sunset and yet I could observe hostile planes shining as the last rays of the sun struck them. Lower, the background appeared to be a July 4th celebration as AA batteries along the palisades let loose. Flashes illuminated the ground areas and red streaks mottled the horizon.

It was not long before we found just how inadequate the narrow-gauge railroad was. We rolled through the night trying to sleep but as the going got more precipitous toward morning we had to lighten the load by getting everyone out of the train to push it up over the next rise. As the train gathered momentum on the downgrade, it was a scramble each time to

get aboard with several men left behind. By jogging along they'd catch up with the train at the next slope.

We arrived at our bivouac area which for my regiment was a plateau over which towered a mountain called Djebel Kharhoum. It was a barren peak with little or no vegetation on its slopes but useful for conditioning runs up and down its dusty surfaces. Its peak made a fine place for setting up practice OPs.

HIGH DIPLOMACY

At about that time, the German position in N. Africa became critical. Prisoners by the thousands were being taken and our training became more serious as we thought we might be called into the flight. A day arrived when the Regimental C.O. ordered me to accompany him on a visit to an Arab encampment high on another mountain some distance from our bivouac. I could speak French and he wanted me to help convince the chief of an Arab tribe, which had just moved into a centuries old camping ground, to move out again. It was also the site of an artillery impact area for one of our important exercises that had been surveyed in. Since time was critical, the quickest answer was to get the tribe to move.

I went with the Colonel to see some local French Army officers in a small town near our area. They had had dealings with the tribe in question over the years and my C.O. wanted to learn what they knew that would be helpful to our mission. They said they didn't envy us which augered poorly but then said that we might succeed with the tribal chief if, above all, we were diplomatic. He would probably invite us to eat with him and, should this happen, it was essential for us to dip our left hands into a common pot—right hands being reserved, according to Arab protocol, for the more intimate bodily functions.

I would also be useful, they said, to bring him presents such as cigarettes and canned food. It was about 110 degrees Fahrenheit when the Colonel and I left in a jeep, accompanied by two riflemen and drove toward our destination to visit the tribal chief. We followed an old camel trail up a very steep incline until we had to walk the last hundred yards. Earlier we had spotted the Arab's camp ground but as we drew nearer, small shrubs and bushes screened the camel-skin tents from view. Their neutral colors made them hard to discern in any event.

It was an easy matter, however, to find the camp by following our noses. Smoke from many small fires was fairly pungent as were the odors of camels, goats, dirty children and unwashed people. There were about two dozen tents, ugly-looking and squat, in a small glen. Camels were snarling and stomping, as usual, and dogs yipped as they romped around naked children playing between tents.

THE MEETING

As the Colonel and I clambered up a gully toward the village, half a dozen Arab men came out of a central tent and watched our approach.

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They carried over their arms the long, ancient-looking rifle that we had often seen in our travels around the countryside.

I spoke to a fierce-looking man who had the air of a chief and in pantomime told him we'd like to talk with him. He waved us inside the tent before which we stood. As I passed the group I gave each a carton of cigarettes I'd been carrying. They wickered thanks in Arabiac; at least, I inferred that it was thanks.

We sat cross-legged in a circle around a small fire where food was cooking. Slatternly women faded into the background of the tent which was about ten feet high at the peak and fairly light inside since the sides were rolled up for about four feet all around.

The chief looked ancient with most of his teeth and one eye missing. I asked him in French if he could speak that language since I knew no Arabic. He nodded, looking at me with a sustained stare from his good eye. However, when I explained our mission, he responded in Arabic which, of course, left us precisely nowhere. The four or five other Arabs said nothing.

My C.O. sitting at my right, while the chief was on my left, took no part in the conversation, if such it could be called. I caught a glimpse of the colonel's face for a moment and realized that his weak stomach was about to let him down. I'd seen him get sea-sick on a dock and the smell of the tent and its occupants was nauseating.

A DIAGRAM

Finally, I resorted to drawing a map with a stick on the dirt floor of the tent. After inspecting my art work the old chief seemed to grasp what I was driving at. I pointed out my symbol of Djebel Kharhoum and pronounced its name. He nodded. Then I pointed to some cannon I'd drawn near the mountain and said, "Boom! Boom!" He nodded as did some of the other Arabs who were watching. Then, I pointed to a tent village I'd sketched in some distance away and pointed to the area around us with all encompassing motion. The chief nodded, again. When I showed him the cannon firing, and with a sweep of my hand erased the tents, he looked offended and drew back away from me. I realized that he'd taken my warning as a threat of war.

I shook my head and said "No! No! You" pointing to him, "must move." I tried French again in what I realized was a hopeless cause and said "Allez-vous au Sud" (Go South). He seemed to grasp the idea but held up both hands with his fingers spread which I took to mean that he'd move out in ten days. Again I shook my head and held up one finger.

THE MEAL

A woman intruded on our parley at that moment and uncovered the pot sitting on the fire in front of us. The chief with his toothless grin, gestured for us to help ourselves. He and the other Arabs dug into a gooey mess using their left hands. The colonel flapped a wrist indicating

that he would pass. I took a small gob of whatever was in the pot and ate it. It tasted sourish as though it contained milk that had turned.

At this juncture, my C.O. jabbed me in the right arm and simply pointed at something a woman was offering him, accompanied by a brown-toothed smile and some encouraging noises. He waved it off, whereupon she proffered the item, which sat on some kind of broad leaf, to me. As she did the chief slapped me on the shoulder nodding and jabbering away in his high-pitched voice.

I took a look at the mess and realized that I was looking at a goat's eye. Anyone who has not seen such a delicacy out of its natural setting would not profit by any further description of what I was inspecting. It was frightful and my whole being, let alone my stomach, was revolted by the thought of doing anything but stomping on it.

Vaguely to my mind came the French officers' warning of the need of diplomacy. I made the mental note that, if I ever saw those officers again, I'd have some questions about their ideas as to when diplomacy ended and idiocy set in. Without another thought while taking a deep breath I swallowed the equivalent to my mind of a violently ill oyster. At that moment I was very close to matching my C.O.'s condition.

As I was endeavoring to quiet the hand-to-hand combat between the goat's eye and my stomach, a woman entered the tent with an armful of fuel for the fireplace which had burned low. Wood being scarce in that part of the world, people made-do with whatever was at hand and flammable. In this case it was some fairly green camel's chips, having been dropped, it seemed, but recently. A few hours in the African sun normally reduces these waste materials to tinder. However, here the collection process had been premature and the woman could hardly be blamed for dropping the whole load onto the embers in the circular fireplace. The resulting noxious fumes that filled the tent were downright disgusting.

Until that happened I had had reason to believe, judging from the general easing of tension around the tent, that the chief was ready to order an immediate move of the tribe. He was in the mood, however, to bargain for more cigarettes and canned goods. I had noted some U.S. ration cans in one corner of the tent and wondered how they had been procured.

A MISSION UNDONE

Unfortunately, the conference was interrupted permanently at that point by my C.O. who simply threw up all over the place. He retched until I had to swallow hard to keep from joining him. I got up and walked out of the tent and down the slope to the jeep to await the colonel. There was no doubt that our mission was a rank failure, in every sense of the word. The chief acted as though we had insulted him beyond all conscience. He had gestured for us to leave even before I arose to my feet so that I knew there was no use in talking longer.

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THE COST

It says something about wartime and human values, I'm sure, when I report that our infantry-artillery exercises went on as scheduled and a number of the Arabs of that transient village were killed. Our first notice of that fact occurred when the old chief showed up with a group of Arabs dragging a two-wheeled cart in which lay a nude, mutilated body of a male Arab very obviously killed by shell fragments. After negotiations a price satisfactory to the old chief was paid for that body and several others brought in later.

ATEBRINE MOUNTAIN

The word came down from higher headquarters that a new pill had been devised to suppress the symptoms of malaria. Called "atebrine" and yellow in color, its dosage had yet to be determined by experimentation with such guinea-pig units as the 36th Division.

We took three pills a day under close supervision at the mess line. The day following the initial dosage is probably a red-letter day in the lives of all who participated. The whole outfit, throwing up while squatting, gave ample proof that the prescribed number of pills was too great. Since my regiment was working on or around the old Djebel, it has been known ever since as "Atebrine Mountain."

FLYING COLUMN

After we completed our joint exercise with the artillery, I was ordered to take a flying column to the coast near Arzew, Algeria. The Third Division had de-camped in the night with a suddenness that left millions of dollars worth of equipment lying all over a bivouac area. We were to gather up the residue into a central area and guard it until it could be properly disposed of by some of the permanent installations in Oran. When I learned that the estimated value of the property abandoned by the Third Division was nine million dollars I realized I'd been dealt a cold hand.

When we left camp, our column stretched for miles along the dusty mountain roads, comprised as it was of vehicles carrying troops, engineer equipment, housekeeping units and cannon company towed guns. Ahead of the column the regimental I and R platoon scouted the terrain making use of the opportunity to improve its members' skills.

Knowing how little was safe with Arabs ready to steal anything not tied down it was clear that we'd better get to our objective 150 miles away without delay. It was also plain that the heat was no longer on the 36th Division to ride to the sounds of battle near Bizerte since the 3rd Division had obviously received the nod for that assignment.

On our way down the steep routes of the Atlas foothills something happened so fast that everyone in the column, stood, while at a rest halt, as though paralyzed.

DIVE BOMBED

One moment all was normal; the next, a sortie of six planes swung around the shoulder of a mountain and dove on our column, motors roaring to wake the dead. Recognition of the planes as American was practically instantaneous. However, we had been warned that the Germans had captured a number like them and were ambushing our troops with them. Painted on the snouts of the planes were sharks' heads with teeth like scimitars and the sight at tree height was enough to congeal one's blood. I learned later that the congealing effect was universal among our troops as the planes nearly bowled us over with their prop blasts. I caught sight of a waving glove from the last plan as it zoomed in a tight climb to join the rest of its flight. It was only "friendlies" having some fun.

MARAUDING ARABS

We reached the abandoned 3rd Division site well after dark and learned from a corporal's guard that had been left to try to protect the area, that marauding Arabs had not hesitated to loot the place, returning fire when shot at. We set up camp in a central position by appropriating pyramidal tents already in place.

At 0400 the following day I set out with the I and R platoon to put into effect a plan devised the night before with the unit commanders of our flying column. We had used a map of the campsite made available by a Lieutenant of the 3rd Division. Through its use I had divided the area into a series of zones assigned to the respective units. They were to start at the outer camp perimeter and move everything of value to a central series of storage points, cataloguing items as they were stored.

The I and R platoon was to move with me to the easternmost boundary of the camp where Arabs had been busiest on previous days, and there reinforce the other guards, posted by each unit, with roving patrols armed with 50 caliber machine guns mounted on jeeps. Part of the plan depended on receipt of a QM Truck Co. I had requisitioned from the Oran Base Section and which was scheduled to arrive later that day.

ATTACK AT DAWN

It was still dark when the I and R jeep I rode in stopped in a depression between two ridges where we dismounted to listen. We could hear the gobbling effect of Arab voices and the creaking of what sounded like wagon wheels on the ridge marking the outer limit of the campsite. We could also hear digging sounds which puzzled us at the time.

As the sun rose, we saw a large number of Arabs moving along the ridge with carts drawn by burros, mules, camels and goats. They were picking up everything in sight: ammunition, gasoline bidons, cartons of food, blankets, the works. Several of our jeeps, deployed as skirmishers, started forward toward the Arabs. By that time it was broad daylight and the Arabs nearest us scuttled for cover as they heard our motors start.

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Thinking that it would disperse the rest of the looters, I ordered the machine gunners to fire well over the heads of the motley crew that was still scavenging. While some of them turned their vehicles to leave the camp ground, others fired their weapons directly at us. We could hear the shots zipping through the brushwood and small trees but fortunately no one was hit.

I ordered the gunners to fire for effect as we gunned the jeeps forward at a fairly fast rate of speed. The Arabs turned and ran abandoning their animals and carts. Our shooting from the wildly bouncing jeeps turned out about as effective as that of the Arabs for we found no wounded nor did we ever hear of any. Inspection showed that the digging we'd heard was where the Arabs had uncovered old latrines in some of which they had found unopened cans of C-rations. Such was the hunger among Arabs at the time that they were retrieving the dung-covered cans to take home.

A SALVAGE JOB

It took a number of days, of course, to pull together what looked like the remnants of a panicky, nighttime bug-out by the 3rd Division. Apparently from the appearance of the place the Division had been told to take with it just what the men could carry on their backs. Either that or, like many veteran outfits, it had, in one way or another, just about doubled the "E" of its T/O and E. Finally on entering combat it had had to shuck off all superfluous impediments.

The 36th Division, no slouch itself, at moonlight requisitioning things to make life more comfortable in the field, had dibs on a lot of stuff that came in handy from that time on. There were non-GI chairs and tables that were fair game. Then there were such things as gasoline stoves, desks, tents, collapsible canvas wash basins, pin-ups of glorious creatures, soccer balls, baseball equipment, and similar moral builders that found their way to T-Patch country. There were also some GI items that fell through the cracks like radios and field telephones.

During all the time that the 3rd Division property was being salvaged no Brass came near the site from higher headquarters. By the time the rest of the 36th gathered in the vicinity of Arzew, where we were to undergo a refresher course in amphibious operations, the campsite was under control and the Oran Base Section had accepted an accounting of the property.

SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS

Several officers from the 36th Division were ordered to an Officers Training Camp near the Sahara Desert just after the amphibious refresher program started at Arzew. I was one of them. Operated by Brigadier General William H. Wilbur, who later became the Assistant Division Commander of the 36th, the camp was designed, the general said, to produce mental toughness, physical toughness at the stage of the game being a given.

ORIENTATION

At an orientation session the first morning, General Wilbur, holder of the Congressional Medal of Honor, told us that our training would include doses of peril and sleeplessness closely simulating battle conditions. In fact, he stated that nothing in combat would exceed the stress under which we would operate at his so-called "school". For reasons which should become clearer, we came to know the place as, "Wilbur's School of Torture and Dirty Tricks."

We were to operate 24 and 12-hour shifts on alternating days without opportunity to catch up on sleep missed on those days when we kept moving around the clock. We were also to be subjected to water discipline, reserving our canteens full of water until each evening when they would be inspected before we could drink from them.

We would be taught, the hard way, to look for and avoid booby-traps. We would also learn to shoot at targets of fleeting opportunity, to "read" terrain in order to know how to use it to best advantage and, finally, assuming that we were successful in all such matters, we would follow artillery fire closely as a means of approaching hostile positions while the enemy was dodging our artillery.

To test our endurance to the utmost, we would run four miles a day under the desert sun—two miles down-hill, two miles back up—while carrying full packs and equipment. The general would ride behind us to assure compliance with all requirements of the exercise.

Should we not stand up under the abuse we would be returned to the States, the general said, for reclassification, subject to the draft.

THE GAMES BEGIN

The so-called "fun" started that day and went on all night and through the evening meal the next day. While I had been tired in my life I had never quite reached the pinnacle of exhaustion of that period. The sun sapped at our vitals and the lack of water made our bodies ache as we solved endless problems, experienced harsh situations and absorbed punishment.

Nothing would have prompted me to cut a corner, sneak a nap, ease off running or phoney up a response for, unlike anyone there, I had fenced under Wilbur's coaching at Boston University, where he had also been my Professor of Military Science and Tactics in the ROTC course there.

During the second day's run I felt light-headed and ready to drop as I jogged through the sand with the pack on my back weighing a ton. However, the sight of the jutting jaw of my old mentor riding herd on our column kept me moving. When we were released from that initial stint in Purgatory I went to take a shower and was staggered by the water which, even though it had stood in the 110 to 120 degree heat in a tower, felt frigid because of the disparity between its temperature of 80 degrees and the atmospheric temperature at the 110 mark. All of us slept under blankets that night and were chilly when we awoke the next morning.

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THE WADI

The next day's work, limited to just 12 hours, was sited in a water course, known locally as a wadi. It had been cut into the soil and solid rock by wind and rain over the centuries. There were directional signs posted along its rim that extended, so far as we could see, for several hundred yards from the outlet we were approaching.

Clusters of the school's cadre were gathered at the busing point, only to disappear into and around the wadi as we trainees arrived. We were issued carbines and live ammunition. Our starting point along and into the wadi was a ledge that formed a slightly depressed trail just below the right rim of the wadi. A sign there read: "Crawl on your guts on this trail to the next sign. Keep your butt low since you will be fired at from outside the wadi as you crawl."

BITING THE DUST

We crawled, one after the other, along the path which was about two feet below the general ground surface of that area and ten feet above the floor of the wadi. As we slithered forward, several bursts of automatic fire were directed at the edge of the surface immediately above our bodies. Something about the thud of bullets striking the earth and ricocheting off rocks to strike the opposite wadi wall prompted a sudden butt retraction on the part of all participants.

Near the end of the crawl path I waited while the officer ahead of me poked his head above the rim of the wadi in response, I assumed, to instructions on a sign posted near him. Suddenly he ducked down and ran a hand over his face as though rubbing something from his eyes. At that moment I saw General Wilbur's head and shoulders as he leaned over to speak to the officer.

The general disappeared and the officer on the trail put his chin up over the edge of the wadi again. I could see him jump as a shot followed by two more, rang out. He, however, did not duck back as he had done earlier.

I crawled to the sign, in turn, and read, "Rest your chin on the edge of the wadi until three shots have been fired. If you flinch, three more will be fired until proper completion of the test." I complied and on looking straight ahead/saw the stern face of General Wilbur. Out of the corner of my right eye I could see a man sitting on a rock some ten feet away. Under my chin was a box of sand buried in the ground. As the general nodded, the man at my right raised a weapon of some sort and fired. My face stung as sand, from the impact of a bullet, blasted into it. I could feel grit in my eyes and teeth as I waited. Two more shots, deliberately fired with no sense of rhythm to them, produced the same rotten sensation. I could feel a trickle of wetness down my right cheek and hoped it was only sweat. I also hoped, during the test, that the man doing the firing had no serious nervous afflictions. His angle of fire was directed past my nose but any slight waver to the left could have nailed me.

KO'D BY DUMMIES

As I jumped down into the wadi as directed by General Wilbur, I brushed my cheek with my hand and was relieved to find that the wetness was only sweat. I spit out some grit and then jumped violently as a quarter-pound block of dynamite was discharged directly behind me. It was so close and the sound was so heavily magnified by the walls of the wadi that my hearing was damaged for the rest of the day and for several days thereafter. When anyone spoke to me, the effect was one of cutting words into vibrating metallic strings that went shimmering off into diminishing echoes, scarcely understandable.

A sign admonished me to be alert for booby traps and "hostile" ambushes as I proceeded up the length of the wadi. Even though I recognized the need to set up problems to demonstrate certain lessons, I had the constant thought that only a damned fool, finding himself in combat, would jump into the wadi before checking it out from its rim.

Needless to say, the critique at the end of the day's work found all trainees "dead" from having been "shot" by "dummies" that appeared and disappeared in a flash. Furthermore, before the gauntlet ended we were nearly suffocated by the heat trapped within the wadi. Several officers were knocked out by heat exhaustion.

WASH-OUTS

While some of us felt sorry for a number of officers who "washed out" of the school for failure to meet its standards, we could have saved our sympathy for those more in need of it. Even though General Wilbur probably meant what he's said about drop-outs being re-classified, it didn't work out that way. Fortuitously for the departed fallen, the Military Government structure of the Army was being fleshed out at that time. As a result, those who couldn't cut it at the "Wilbur School of Torture and Dirty Tricks" fell into plush jobs and furthermore, the Army, being the anomalous entity that it is, promoted many of them before those of us who entered combat received promotions.

CRACK AND THUMP

Our next conditioner was the "Crack and Thump" course where we stood around General Wilbur, who couldn't seem to get enough of this sort of thing, while German guns were fired in short bursts over our heads. The sound of bullets passing close to our ears, we learned, if we hadn't already picked up that lore from operating targets on rifle ranges, is that of a gigantic hand clap. Since the bullet's speed exceeds that of sound, the trick was to listen for the slower thumping sound of the gun's firing, once the bullets had passed. On a noisy battlefield, the general said, it was often critical but difficult to learn the location of hostile gun sites.

We moved to longer ranges to learn the variations in timing the "thumps" at the greater distances.

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THE "BIG SHOOT"

We approached the end of our "duration vile" with the solid sense of having licked a tough assignment, although any sense of elation had been knocked out of us by the heat and fatigue. The grand finale of our testing was the overhead artillery exercise called by the camp cadre, "The Big Shoot."

Its seriousness was made clear when the head of the artillery unit assured us that even though he and his men had removed the powder charges from the 100 mm shells to test and reload them, he could not guarantee the absence of a short round among them. He felt that we would be "fairly safe" if we "hugged the ground" at the appropriate moments during the advance across open ground toward a "hostile" strongpoint.

On the day of the exercise, General Mark W. Clark, he of the immense ego, happened by on an inspection tour of the camp. He drew up with his entourage at the range where my class was assembled preparatory to its entry into the maneuver under fire.

I was squad leader and had just deployed my unit across a field covered with low growing shrubs. In the distance, some one thousand yards away, was a pile of rocks representing the squad's objective. All units had rehearsed at another location the manner in which they would proceed across the intervening terrain.

THE "AMERICAN EAGLE"

When it came time to start the squad toward the rock pile, I yelled "Up!" and we ran full tilt until I heard a flight of shells shearing the air overhead, when I yelled, "Down!" We plunged to earth, bouncing around as we hit due to the force of our landing. The shells struck the ground about fifty yards in front of us. I gave the squad another, "Up!" and as we ran I heard feet pounding along behind me. Thinking it was a laggard from my squad, I turned to see General Clark bowling along with us. He had removed his blouse and was wearing a helmet, but otherwise was making a serious effort to stay the course. When I shouted, "Down!" he crashed to the ground along with the squad.

In the meantime, out in front of our unit, running backward and remaining erect during the whole process was General Wilbur. He was then, and later in combat, disdainful of flying steel. A spent piece of shell fragment struck my boot heel at one moment when I was much further away from the detonating shells than was Wilbur.

STUNG

As we approached our objective, I became aware of a painful stinging in my chest, thighs and forearms. Fearful that I was about to have some kind of seizure I gritted my teeth and kept going until I passed the pile of rocks. There, I found men tearing off their shirts and looking at great blisters all over the fronts of their bodies. I did the same thankful that I

wasn't alone with my painful symptoms. Someone yelled "Stinging nettles!" and shortly a medico identified that as our problem. We had been plunging into a field of them as we took our final exam.

RELEASE FROM PURGATORY

General Clark, having been subjected to the same treatment, was so winded and uncomfortable that he could only wave both arms at General Wilbur when the latter asked him if he'd like to critique the exercise. Whether the "American Eagle" as the Fifth Army CG liked to characterize himself, altered the course following his experience under my "command" I never learned. We were happy to realize that we would return to our units the following day.



*"Hell! Just when I git my practice built up,
they transfer me to another regiment."*

Capture and Escape

Richard M. Manton

A letter sent to Col. Hank Gomez—141st Inf.

Dear Henry and Mary:

A few days ago I received yet another package from you containing the complete Volume VI (1968) set of Historical Quarterlies, Numbers 1 through 4. I want to thank you very much for your kindness and thoughtfulness in sending these editions to me but I must tell you that I subscribe to Historical Quarterlies and I have on hand all copies starting with Volume IV up to the present time. Of course the story "Kriegie" by "Chum" Williamson was of great interest to me in that it tells about Oflag 64 where I was interred at the same time as the author. My experience differs with his after we began the march back into Germany which began on January 21, 1945 (just exactly one year from the date of my capture at the Rapido River in Italy). While we were being marched back toward Germany I escaped from the column on the road. I merely sat at the side of the road and when a German guard questioned me, "Was ist los?" I replied "Ich bin krank." He simply replied with disgust, "Ach", and he walked away leaving me sitting there. I ducked into a Polish home where the family concealed me and fed me. There were several other American Officers there also and after a time we took off walking toward Russia. I became separated from them and finally I stopped at a large Polish farm house. It reminded me of the feudal system with a large manor house and down the lane a village of huts where the farm workers lived. The first night I spent sleeping on a G.I. raincoat and when I awoke in the morning I discovered that I was in the middle of a frozen pond. Remember we were in North Central Poland in the middle of January. The next day I met up with Lt. Jim Lisembe, an old buddy of mine. We moved into the barn and the next night we slept in the barn on top of a pile of manure. The manure generated heat and we were toasty warm but Jim got badly bitten with lice. They didn't seem to bother me but he must have been allergic because he swelled up all over.

After that we moved into the manor house where a large number of American Officers were gathering. All of them had escaped from the Germans on the march. There must have been between fifteen and twenty of us. We didn't have any heat in the house but it was shelter from the wind and we had some gear to sleep on and keep warm. The Polish farmers were wonderful to us. They provided us with food from their already meager supplies. We waited there for several days until a Russian column came by and found us. They first Russian who came upon us

almost shot us because he thought we were German. Not being able to speak Russian someone from our group decided to try speaking German and the Russian sergeant shot his machine pistol into the air and we all hit the deck. We shouted "Americanski, Americanski!" and he finally caught on that we were Americans.

From there we were taken back, by truck, to Rimbortov, across the Vistula River from Warsaw. There was a redistribution center there and they had people from all over of every nationality. We were able to take warm showers and they fed us a couple of meals a day, even though one might be at 2 a.m. and they consisted primarily of soup and kasha (a mixture of boiled grains). Eventually we were loaded on railroad boxcars and shipped down to Odessa, on the Black Sea. We were put up in the old Italian Embassy building and there was a large stone wall all around it and they placed guards on the gates and we were confined there almost as much as we had been in Germany. I became sick with dysentery while there and I was in a Russian hospital. Conditions there were primitive and I was in a ward with several other ExPOWs until one day a man came into the ward and said there was an American Liberty Ship and another British ship in the harbor which was going to take the ExPOWs out. I was the only officer in the hospital so I told the men to get their clothes and come with me. The Russians didn't want us to leave but we went anyway and walked down to the compound where the Americans were and we reported to the Colonel in charge. He put us in front of the column and we marched down to the docks and boarded the ships.

From there we went to Port Said, Egypt, for some debriefing and medical treatment and then back to Naples, Italy. From there we sailed home on a lone ship across the North Atlantic. Just as we were about to come into Boston Harbor we had a submarine scare. Our ship began to zigzag and a dirigible came out and dropped depth charges on the sub. We were in sight of land when this occurred. So that is how I happened to get back to the United States even before the war in Europe ended.

I didn't expect to write this story in this letter but the feature in the Historical Quarterlies that you sent to me prompted my memory of these events and I thought you might be interested in reading it. It isn't a very good story for the Christmas season but at least it does have a happy ending.

Again, my thanks for your kindness and consideration in sending the complete Volume VI. Since I already have a set, I may just pass them on to one of my grandchildren if they are interested. Best wishes for a very Merry Christmas and Joyous 1990. Have fun on the ski slopes.

Kindest regards to all
Richard M. Manton



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A Fiddle for Hollywood White

by A. F. (Amil) Kohutek

Btry. C, 132nd

Worldwartwoveterans.org

Virgil L. White was a Gunner Corporal in Battery C 132nd Field Artillery. He arrived in the Battery area sometime in February, 1941. Few, if any, knew him as Virgil—early on he was named Hollywood. It is not known who gave him this title. He had the good looks of a Hollywood actor. Some say he was headed for Hollywood when that man with the funny hat pointed his finger. About that time the song was making the rounds, “I’ll Be Back in a Year Little Darlin’.” Hollywood might have meant to give Uncle Sam his one year and be on his way to Hollywood. Current events at the time changed Hollywood’s plans. A mad man in Germany, and his jack booted legions were trampling the Bolshevik herds into the mud of the Russian steepes. And, before Hollywood’s year was up, Hitler promised the world that the swastika would fly atop the Kremlin walls.

Hollywood White was a legend among the men in Battery C. He marched with the best. Hollywood had another talent. Among the fiddle players, Hollywood was by far the best. He could and often did take any old fiddle and make good music. He was not Rubinoff; he preferred Country and Western, much to the delight of common folks. Often he played with such enthusiams, long after the lights were out, that Pokie Barker had to get out of bed, dress, and walk down the Battery Street and remind those that a 9 o’clock curfew was enforced. This prompted Hirman D. Atchison to sing that diddy, “Mama Dont Allow No Fiddle Playing Here.” When Hollywood was processed into the Army, they may have failed to ask if he had any musical qualifications, or they badly needed cannoneers. It would have been Battery C’s misfortune for Hollywood to have been assigned to the Div. Band.

Battery C was gifted with other fiddlers—Aubrey Ford, John Mader, the left-handed fiddler, and never to be left out, Alton Willoughby. Hollywood remained in the Battery long after the others left. For long periods we were without the sound of Hollywood and his fiddle, as we moved often, as a fiddle cannot be jolted around in a six by six.

Sometimes a borrowed fiddle hastily tuned up, provided beautiful music. Hollywood White always came through. Fiddle music under the stars and a lonely outpost, made life worthwhile.

Battery C was trampling in the mud across France, and soon to be through the Belfort Gap, bordering Switzerland. A crew of Forward Artillery Observers—Amil Kohutek, Lem West, Omar Lewis, Norman Micciche, Lt. John Conley, and jeep driver, Asa Smith, with CO L 142nd Infantry, dropped a four-gun Battery of one round into a small French village where a party of Germans were seen. The Germans had no fight left and before the Americans could cross a small river, the Germans fled, along with the civilians. The Arty Crew arrived at a house in reasonably good shape. While Lt. Conley and I made plans to get something to eat (a dozen eggs, few potatoes, and green onion mixed with a can of C Ration stew) the rest of the section elected to do what the conquering army has done since time—to loot. Part of the trailer pulled by Asa Smith's jeep was loot among 30 caliber rifle ammo dropped by tired infantry. Macciche walks up with a fiddle, and announced that "this was an old, old fiddle we gathered." He knew his fiddles. It was decided to present this to Hollywood White, next time we were relieved. Lt. Conley, an officer and a perfect gentleman, prevailed, by telling us the fiddle goes back to where it came from. Later, we moved 15 kilos further and unknown to Lt. Conley, the fiddle was stashed under a tarp in the trailer. Before leaving the house, the French returned and the owner of the house soon found the fiddle missing. We denied knowing anything about it and Lt. Conley allowed that someone else must have "histed" it. It was decided among us that it best to return the fiddle and that whoever was left with the jeep would return it. Micciche and Asa Smith returned the fiddle, unknown to Lt. Conley. The Frenchman hugged Smith and Micciche and kissed both on the cheek. He was the happiest Frenchman in that village. When leaving, he presented both with a bottle of Cognac, which we later shared.

Hollywood never got his fiddle. Lt. Conley never knew that we in fact, stole the fiddle. He never questioned where we got the Cognac, to which we shared equally. In time, this was all forgotten. Micciche joined the Battery long after Hollywood had no fiddle to play. He only heard that Hollywood was a good fiddler and was more or less trying to boost morale, which at the time needed a boost.

Now more than forty years later, Micciche and West are dead, Asa Smith returned to his home town, and married the girl who sat in front of him in school and often got her long, curly hair dipped in the inkwell. Lt. Conley lives in Sioux City, Iowa; Omar Lewis is sunning himself in far West Texas, place called Alpine. And as for me, I am in front of this battered machine, trying hard to remember some things forgotten so many years ago.

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Hollywood White was last seen inside a German Chateau, where C. Battery was billeted, June 1945. No one claims to have seen him since. He once lived in Texas City, Dallas, Quanah, Burkburnett, and a place near Haltom City. Andrew Hejl and Amil Kohutek tracked him to an apartment, only to be two weeks too late. He left no forwarding address. I last saw Hollywood White sharing a stool in Germany, with Archie Harriett. Both were playing a piano together. Beautiful music, which proved that Hollywood could play something other than a fiddle.



Anti Tank Company in The Battle for Oberhoffen

Rotate Review

By A. F. Amil Kohutek C 132nd F A Bn

Little was ever said of the Anti Tank Company of the 142nd Infantry for the battle of Oberhoffen, but we were there. Anti Tank was sent in to help hold the town after it was taken. After we moved in things began to happen. We were set up in the edge of the town facing the woods where Germans were dug in, and were shelled day and night. We had such a large area to cover and were so short of men and we had little chance to rest.

One morning we saw a few Germans coming in across an open field to the lower end of town as if they were giving up. Then a large group started across. We opened up with our machine guns and got a lot of them. Then the same afternoon a bunch of about 80 started from the woods toward the town. We opened up again, calling in Mortar fire and gave them hell. Just a few got away. After dark we could hear them screaming and moaning. Later we heard what sounded like pistol shots. The Germans were actually killing their own wounded.

We were sent into Oberhoffen to relieve elements of the First Battalion on the fourth of February to the eleventh. The weather was bad, and guard at night was tough, but our mines, booby traps and flares worked fine. Our men endangered themselves many times resetting mines and booby traps and repairing lines to our positions and CP.

Alertness and teamwork contributed to our success in defending Oberhoffen.



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The 141st Infantry Regimental Band & the P.F.C.

by Ramon Narvaez, Jr.



Worldwarveterans.org



Camp Route Band's Company Street James Wilson with Drum.
WO Tampke with coat in rear, 3rd party unknown.

PART ONE

PRELUDE TO WAR

GALVESTON, TEXAS 1932 to 1940. Delano Roosevelt was our President. Galveston was beginning to get over the Depression and was becoming the fun city of the south. Night clubs, gambling joints wide open, beauty contests, famous swing bands coming in like Benny Goodman, Harry James, Jack Teagarden and so on and the yearly Mardi Gras. The good ole Texas Rangers were busy raiding gambling joints while

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the Japanese were docking their ships and loading them with scrap metal and cotton and then taking off for Japan.

One day in 1932 my father, Ramon Narvaez, Sr., said to me and my brother, Felipe, "Ramon, I am going to teach you the Mandolin and Felipe the Violin." His reason: During World War I, several of his friends were musicians in an Army Band and he told us, if war ever came he wanted us to serve our country by joining an Army Band. Not long thereafter, Felipe and I joined the Galveston Booster Boys and Girls Band. We were on our way to becoming musicians, fulfilling our father's wishes. In 1937 our dear mother, Tomacita Bravo Narvaez, passed away. Felipe and I went to work but we still played our instruments. By 1939 Hitler was raising hell in Europe. England wanted the U.S. to join her. No American will go to War, said Roosevelt, our President. By October 1940 to keep from registering with the Draft Board I enlisted in the Texas National Guard, Company H, 143rd Infantry Regiment. My brother, Felipe, since he joined the Merchant Marines, stayed with Merchant Marines. Louis, my oldest brother, worked at the ship yard, remained at home, married with three kids.

I sometimes wonder if my father, God bless his soul, may have had a premonition that in his near future our country would be at war.

WORLD WAR II. The story you are about to read is about the 141st Infantry Regiment Band of the Texas 36th Infantry Division as I saw, lived and participated with the Band for four years and six months, January 1941 thru July 1945. There may be other stories by other members of the 141st Band but this is my story, my destiny with the Band.

COMPANY H

The Texas National Guard, Company H, 143rd Regiment Armory, a Galveston unit, was located between 21st and 22nd streets on "C" or Mechanic Street. The Armory was on the second floor, above the Galveston Bowling Lanes. On October 16, 1940 I joined Company H. The irony part was, two years earlier I had been the Manager of the Galveston Lanes and on the weekends that the guards attended their meeting, I would stand at the entrance of the Lanes and see the troops entering or leaving with their uniforms on, Campaign hat, riding britches pants and wool leggings wrapped around their legs, etc, etc. Late 1938 I had accepted the Management of the Texas City Lanes and was living in Texas City. I had already informed my boss that I was joining the National Guard. On Oct. 16, 1940 I joined Company H in Galveston. On the second weekend of November at the Guard meeting we were told to get our personal business settled that we would be mobilized on the 25th of November. On the 24th I said goodbye to the boss and his family, got paid and left Texas City for the last time. Since all my belongings were at the Armory I stopped at my brother's home and gave him my keys to the 1935 Ford I owned. That night I slept at the Armory.

That morning of November 25 we got up around 6 a.m., dressed and went down, across an alley, to a kitchen that had been set up at the rear of a Pool Hall, got in line for breakfast, mess kit in hand. As we got closer to the stove one guy said, ooooth SOS. The Mess Sergeant said, "Alright you, Move. If you don't like it, move, next!" I asked what is SOS. The guy behind me said, you'll see. When I got to the stove where the pan was I asked, what is that? The Mess Sgt. said "Shit on the Shingles" do you want it?" I held out my kit and the Sgt. put two slices of toast in the kit and poured what looked like hamburger meat mixed with white gravy or milk into my kit, over the toast. The smell was ok. I heard the Sgt. say, "Another Sucker!"

After breakfast we washed our mess kit in hot water and went back to the Armory. Several minutes after we all were in, the 1st Sgt. hollers, "Fall in." I heard one guy say "Short Arms Inspection." I asked what was Short Arms Inspection? The same guy at breakfast time again said, you'll see. As I walked to get in formation I saw two nurses in the CO office. Got in line and again the 1st Sgt. hollers, "Attention." A few seconds later he yells, "Take off your clothes." I told the guy next to me, "Not me!" I wasn't about to take my clothes off especially when there were two women around. The guy said, "You are in the Army now, you can be court martialed." At the moment the Sgt. said take off your clothes and so I took off my clothes. As I took off my clothes I looked around and saw a bunch of naked bodies in front of me. Boy I was embarrassed. I felt my face hot. Again the Sgt. hollers "Attention." then he hollers, "1st Rank, 4 paces forward...3rd rank 3 paces forward, 2nd rank 2 paces forward. At ease." To my right I could hear someone say, "say ahhh," Ahh...then the first voice would say, cough, the guy would cough, peel it, then bend over and open your cheeks. Then they got to me. Soon it was over. Again the 1st Sgt., "3rd rank backwards 2 paces, 2nd rank backward 3 paces 1st rank backward 4 paces..at ease." Put your clothes on. After we got dressed the Sgt. hollers "Attention! I want some volunteers." "Forwards". Almost everyone stepped ahead. I was about to go ahead but I thought there were enough volunteers so I stayed back, several guys did the same. Then the Sgt. approached us and said, "Since you guys volunteered, get some brooms and sweep the hall." I said "Sarg. I didn't volunteer." He said, "The hell you didn't, get moving." During the past several hours I had learned what SOS was, what Short Arms Inspection was, and to always volunteer.

That afternoon I learned the Army Code of Ethics. Two in particular, salute all officers regardless of rank, failure to do so could mean disobedience, could be punished or court-martialed. Never speak to an officer unless you were told to do so, or if you had permission. Subject to court martial if (1) AWOL (Absent With Out Leave) (2) Found asleep while on guard duty, (3) If you got venereal disease while in the ser-

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Band director: W.O. Homer A. Tamke, Tech Sgt. Wm. H Geyer Mascot: Gloria

vice, fighting and other. Article of War. (1) If confronted by the enemy, kill or be killed. (2) If taken prisoner give only name, rank and serial number also try to escape, you may be killed while escaping but you must try to escape, and etc. etc. One of the guys told me, "You now belong to the Army, life and soul either you do as you are told or you wish you had."

Thinking about all these rules I wondered what I had gotten into but it was too late, I had signed up for one year or the duration. One year wouldn't last long. The next few days we packed our equipment in crates, a truck convoy had come and we loaded the crates aboard. Some of the troops families came and said goodbye and we left for Camp Bowie. At Camp Bowie I learned the water and air cooled .30 cal. Machine guns, the 81 and 60 mortar the .45 cal. pistol. One evening 25 days after we arrived at Camp Bowie, we (and buddy of mine and I) went looking for an Army marching band. The WO Officer accepted us into his Band the 141st Band.

THE 141ST INFANTRY REGIMENT BAND AND THE PFC

The Band was under the command of the 141st Infantry Regiment COMMANDER. The Band was known as the 141st Infantry Regiment

Band. The duties of the Band were to entertain and build up the morale of the Regimental Troops and to perform Regimental duties as required by the Regimental Commander.

Prior to mobilization, Nov. 25, 1940, the 141st Band and originated in San Antonio, Texas, made up mostly of high school students. After mobilization most of them had left. A few remained with the Band. They were Fred E. Hoey, Sgt., Drums; Charles H. Wallace, Sgt., Trumpet; William H. Lucas, Corp, French Horn and Bass Fiddle; David Hernandez, Pvt., Trumpet; John P. McAlister, Pvt., Clarinet; and James A. Wilson, Pvt. Saxophone, all from San Antonio, Texas. By Jan. 1941 most of the Band's vacancies had been filled as follows.

Homer A. Tampke	WO, Band Director	Seguin, TX
William H. Geyer	T/SGT. Baritone	San Antonio, TX
David Craft	T/4, Trumpet	San Antonio, TX
Charles Cooper	T/4, Trombone	San Marcos, TX
Herbert Speagle	T/4, Clarinet, F. Horn	San Antonio, TX
James A. Stewart	T/4, Soucephone	Kennedy, TX
Harry Kolenberg	T/4, Saxophone	Karnes, TX
Jesus Sandoval	T/5, Trombone	San Antonio, TX
Odel Moose	T/5, Drums	New Braunfels, TX
Henry Schrader	T/5, Cornet	Boerne, TX
Armando Breton	PFC, Saxophone	El Paso, TX
Garcia	PFC, Clarinet	El Paso, TX
Ramon Narvaez, Jr.	PFC, Clarinet/Sax	Galveston, TX
Alfred Baschke	PFC, Tuba	Galveston, TX
King	PFC, Trombone	San Antonio, TX
Thornton	PFC, Drum Major	
Moorehouse	PFC, Drum Major	San Antonio, TX

There were several other Bandsmen but I do not recall their names.

The Military/Marching Regiment/Division Band between 24 to 30 musicians and is used for marching, revielle, change of the guard, retreat, concerts, or play for Regiment/Division Reviews etc., etc. Within the Military/Marching Band are musicians who can form a Dance Band (usually 10 to 15 musicians) or a combo (3 to 5 musicians) who can play for dances or just play music. Anything to entertain the Troops.

Although we (Baschke and I), were already since Christmas 1940 with the 141st Band our assignment orders weren't active until Jan. 31, 1941 and so my life as a Bandsman was tied down for one year or the duration if war broke out.

CAMP BOWIE

At Camp Bowie, located several miles north of the town of Brownwood, our living quarters were six man tents. The Band quarters were sited close to the 141st Regimental Headquarters. Near by was the Mess Hall and on the opposite side were the washroom and latrines.

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Drums: L-R: Hugh D. Brennam, Unknown, Odell A. Moose, Guadalupe V. Leal, Unknown.

Camp Bowie was actually a Tent City, the only buildings you saw were the Headquarters Building, the Mess Hall, the wash and latrine building and the churches.

The Band's work schedule was always the same except when the Regiment's Commander assigned the Band other duties such as Field Exercises, roading, guiding, weapons qualifications etc. Every day except Sundays or Holidays, at 5:30 a.m., the Band, with instruments, would fall in formation, in front of the headquarters building and then march up the Regiment's street and back playing reveille. You can rest assured that the beating of the drums, the sound of the trumpets would awake anybody including the sleepy soldier. By the time the Band got back to the Headquarters building, the troops were all out in formation. After roll call we would return back to our tents, clean up, shave, make our beds, then make for the Mess Hall and breakfast. I must say that our Mess Sgt. was one of the best, his meals were well prepared and tasty except supper time. On Saturdays, Sundays or Holidays we had cold cuts, cheese, spam or baloney. I also wish to add, that before we entered the Mess Hall, plates including utensils and food were already on the tables, placed by the KPs, all we had to do was walk in, sit down and eat. Our Mess Sgt.'s motto was, eat all the food you can, but be sure that the last helping on your plate has been eaten. I don't want to see food left in anyone's plate. You take and you eat it all. No food wasted in this Mess Hall by anyone. Oh yes, there were morning we would have good ole SOS, of course with toasty bread.

After breakfast came inspection of quarters, beds, foot lockers, shoes, tent areas, etc., etc. At 8 a.m. we would have lecture in Military courtesy, etc., etc., thereafter would either be Band drill, rehearsals. From 12 to 1 lunch. Thereafter either Band or Dance Band rehearsals. Sometimes the marching band would play during the changing of the guard, which was around 2 pm. Around 3 the dance band would have its rehearsals, the rest of the marching band would have individual instrument practice until about 4:30. The marching band would get ready for retreat, around 5 thereafter was supper. After supper the bandmen were free to go to the PX, movies, Brownwood or stay in. Of course there was always a dice or poker game going on. No. No TV in those days. On Friday night the dance band usually scheduled to play at the Enlisted men club.

Every Saturday morning there were always quarters inspections by a high grade officer, the inspection included sleeping quarters, foot locker, shiny shoes, spic and span uniforms, bed made to have a quarter bounce, (Friday night we would scrub the tent's floor so it would pass Saturday morning inspection), but one Saturday morning a smart aleck officer left a quarter on top of a 2x4 that held the box type frame so that the tent would overlap the tent frame. The following Saturday, again inspected our tent, he comes out and asked if we had cleaned our tent area. Yes Sir, we said. He said let's go inside, once inside he says you, to one of the guys, go to that rafter and slide your hand across and give me what you find. He did so and he says, Boy, I found a quarter and give it to the officer. The officer said, no you did not clean your tent area. The rest of the week we were grounded just because of a silly officer and a quarter. From then on we made sure everything was clean. Another officer would wear white gloves, his specialty was kitchen stove tops.

After our quarter inspection around 10 a.m. there would be field inspection or Regiment/Division Reviews which our Marching Band was always scheduled. Naturally we would play marching music and lead our Regiment pass the Reviewing Stand. Then the Band pulled to the side and continued to play for the passing troops. Some of the families of the GIs, those who came earlier, would watch the passing troop hoping to see their loved ones, son, husband, or father pass in review. By dinner time there were many families visiting their relatives at camp and were invited to have dinner with their kinfolks. Most GIs on Friday night or Saturday morning would leave the camp on passes and go home within one hundred miles and had to be back by Monday so the Mess Hall was able to take care of the families. Some families would stay until Sunday afternoon. Saturdays and Sundays were always family day at Camp Bowie.

Some Saturday afternoons the Military would play a concert here or there Saturday night the Dance Band would play for the Officer's club dances. Sunday morning, sleep late or church, in the afternoon

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around 2 sometimes a band concert.

In the spring of 1941 the lower rank bandmen were assigned KP. Later we learned that some of the Headquarter's troops had complained that the bandmen weren't pulling KP. It could be so because some of the troops jokingly would call the bandmen boiler makers or gold brickers. I was also promoted to T/5 but it didn't last long. One of the favorite bandmen was scheduled for a Saturday KP. The day (Friday) before I had done KP. The Sgt. came and told me I had to pull KP again. He told me in no uncertain tone that I was ordered to do KP again. Around 10 a.m. I saw the WO come out of his tent and I stopped him and told him what the Sgt. had said, that I had to do KP again. I also told the WO that it wasn't fair to pull KP twice in a row, since there were other bandmen who hadn't pulled KP. The WO said, the Sgt. told you to do KP and that's it. Then I asked the WO what's going on? Favoritism? I said, the guy is scheduled to do KP, now I have to do it for him. Why? the WO then called me a "Bolshevik" and told me to do KP, it's an order. So I went on KP. A week later I was demoted back to PFC, reason, disobedience. So I was busted, so what? Couple of weeks later, the guy who was demoted and didn't pull KP got his rank back, I also learned that the guy's parents had spoken to the WO about their son's demotion.

LOUISIANA MANEUVERS

Summer came and the band (military and dance band) kept busy. Every day the band played for reveille, retreats, reviews, etc., and the dance band for both the enlisted men and Officer's dances. Still going on exercises, Rifle Range to qualified on weapons etc., etc. The KP incident almost forgotten. The bandmen were acting more like a unit, we were always together playing music, entertaining the soldiers, that was our job, to build the morale of the troops, that's what we had trained for and that was our mission, Entertainment. That summer we even had a band party at Lake Brownwood. It seems that the PX would give each company/unit, some of the PX profits and so we had a party with such money.

Rumors were that we may have Summer Manuevers. September came and sure enough we were on our way to Louisiana for manuevers. We left Camp Bowie by vehicle convoy, passed Gatesville and Waco, stopped near Mexia, then moved on to Logansport and into Louisiana. That part of Texas was mostly wooded areas full of Pine trees. At many, some of us bandmen were placed at intervals as guides. The troops had all gone by, darkness was slowly coming in, the area was awful quiet and spooky. Suddenly you could hear a scream, my partner said it was a mountain lion, to keep an eye open, that you could see their eyes in the dark, so we looked toward where the scream came from. Again we heard the scream but it had moved into a different direction. Soon thereafter we hear a bell coming down the road, soon we

saw it was a long wagon being pulled by four mules and two men seated with a lantern between them, they were hauling logs. Finally a truck came by and picked us up. After we got together with the rest of the band, there were sure some tall tales about the wooded area. And so we were on maneuvers, my first. The blues were combating the reds. From many, then Leesville and DeRidder. Word was out that a yankee General had taken over the 36th Division. General Birkhe was out. That weekend near DeRidder we heard that one of the guys was on a pass to Houston so we got a ride with him, going and returning, of course we paid for the ride. I visited Galveston but it was a very short visit. Shortly thereafter the maneuvers were over and we headed back to Camp Bowie. We stopped at Center, Texas, gave a concert, from there we went to Colonel Thompson's (Col. Thompson was our CO for the 141st Regiment) home and the Band gave the Colonel and his guests a concert. He was very pleased. Soon we were back at Camp Bowie. October came. All the rumors about General Walker had been true. We now had a new General whose career was Army.

At that period of time, as the old saying goes, we could have read in between the lines and could have foretold that the USA was anticipating War, why had the War Department sent an experienced military General to take over a National Guard Division but we never know.



Sousaphones: James A. Stewart, James A. Wilson

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On December 6, 1941 another bandsman and I were sitting in a movie house in Brownwood when we heard a loud commotion and newspaper boys yelling EXTRA! EXTRA! After we got out of the movies we learned that Pearl Harbor, Hawaii had been bombed by the Japanese. It was December 7, in Hawaii. Monday 8 those bandsmen that had been let out early were back reporting for duty. The 36th was alerted, the 144th Regiment was sent to the West Coast, several other units were sent West. War was declared and the one year game ended. Now we were in for the duration.

December was also the month for the 36th Regimental Bands, the 144th Regiment was no longer with us. The Bands competed in a musical contest. The 142nd won first place. Christmas was almost near, approaching was the end of 1941. 1941 had brought the officer with the white glove, Camp Bowie open house, the band contest, the end of the one year but added the duration because of Dec. 7 and also sorrow to the 141st Regiment when several soldiers died in Auto accidents, and let's not forget a new General and so ended 1941.

CAMP BLANDING

1942 came. January and February, while the band was playing reveille several mornings the brass horn froze and all you could hear was the woodwind instruments playing and the loud beat of the Bass drum. Although the 36th Division had transferred into a Triangular Division, the 141st band was still with the 141st Regiment. Rumors started again, the 36th was moving again. As Roy Rogers would sing "Happy Trails". Around the middle of February, we started to move with the 141st Regiment and the 36th Division headed for Camp Blanding, Florida, the sunshine state. The move was supposed to have been a secret but everybody knew where we were going. We made one stop at Jackson, Miss. It was at night, the bandsmen got into a field to sleep, while looking for a place to lay we came upon a place where there were some dirt mounds since it was cold we laid our bedding between the dirt mounds. One of the bandsmen said, the dirt glows in spots. The next morning we found that we had slept in an abandoned cemetery. No wonder the dirt would glow. When the bandsmen got to Camp Blanding it was already dark and real cold. We had to go out to the coal bin and get coal for the pot belly stoves that were in the tents, so that we could stay warm. The next morning we found our tent shaded with coal smut, which we had to clean out. We also learned that it was the first time Florida had ever had such a cold spell.

Camp Blanding was sited a few miles north of the town Starke. Like at Camp Bowie, there was a boom town (Beer joints scattered along the road to Camp Blanding). Beside its regular band schedule, the bandsmen had to participate in Day or Night Swamp Field exercises. At the lake nearby the bandsmen learned how to go over a boat net and climb down the opposite side with full field pack and rifle. Some of

the bandmen learned how to swim. On weekends some of the bandmen would visit Jacksonville, a city that had an awful smell like sulfur, St. Augustine where the oldest school can be found, (at the entrance of the fort nearby is a metal plate with the name of NARVAEZ), Daytona Beach, and other places in Florida. One night while we were at Camp Blanding, in Boom Town near Starke the 1st Division (the Big Red One) made some of the 36th Division soldiers sing "The Sidewalks of Broadway" and "Yankee Doodle". The 36th soldiers went back to camp and returned with reinforcements and made the 1st Division soldiers sing "The Eyes of Texas" and "Deep in the Heart of Texas." Boy they sure made friends fast.

April, May and June came and went by. More band rehearsals, dance band music for the men and officers of the 141st Regiment/36th Division, and more field and night exercises, etc. We visited Orlando and Silver Springs and other cities in Florida.

N.C. MANUEVERS/CAMP EDWARDS

Soon July came and thereafter the 141st band and other Regiments bands with their Regiments and the 36th left for the North Carolina Manuevers. As usual the 141st Band was put on guide duty. One thing the bandmen knew was how to sleep in the open, pup tents, mess kits, etc. One day while on manuevers, the bandmen were called into formation and dish out 50 cents each because some farmer claimed that his watermelons had been stolen by some 36th Division soldiers. Later we learned that the farmer had been caught stealing his own watermelons. We never got our 50 cents back. The band gave several concerts in nearby towns.

The North Carolina manuevers ended around mid-August, the 36th Division and all the Regiment/Artillery and bands boarded a long passenger train (some said there were between 35 to 45 coaches) and left for Camp Edwards located at Cape Cod, Mass. Upon arrival at Camp Edwards, the bandmen had to clear an area full with small shrubs and pitch some tents and dig a latrine. For baths the bandmen had to go to the nearby barracks. Meals were cooked on field ranges. Finally several months later the bandmen and the rest of the Regiment were assigned barracks.

November 24 came, two years have passed since we were mobilized and now we were at Camp Edwards. Thanksgiving Day came and we had a Yankee turkey dinner, only the turkey was different, not a Texas turkey. On weekends we would get passes to Boston, New York City, Falsmouth, Martha Vinyards and another historic city "Plymouth". One weekend (Sat. night) in Boston, the night club "Coconut Grove" burned and one of our famous cowboys "Buck Jones" died in the fire. December came and Christmas right along, the old year ended and the New Year 1943 began.

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January and February 1943 came and they were very cold months. There were more than a couple days that the bandsmen couldn't play reveille because the instruments would get frozen. It seems that this was another first, the natives claimed that this was the first time that the Cape had had such a winter, even the Barracks had icicles hanging from the Barracks roofs. Also the bandsmen got their first set of galoshes (heavy rubber overshoes) March came and the band had to learn how to crawl through the infiltration course where two machine guns would fire live ammo across each other and the soldier had to crawl on his belly under some barb wire while under fire. March 19 came and I had another birthday, 25 years old. Rumors started to fly again, we were moving again. We even got a little toy that a child could get in a Cracker Jack box. It was a metal toy that when you press it together it would sound like a cricket thus informing the friendly troops that we too were friendly. March was coming to an end and we began to pack.

On the 30th of March, around 3:30 a.m. the 141st band with full field, helmets, instruments and barracks bags, boarded a passenger train and left Camp Edwards. Finally around 2:00 we arrived at Staten Island. Got off the train and marched to a dock where a passenger ship was docked. We went up the gangplank and were directed to the ship's Medical Quarters. As we entered the Medical Quarters we saw beds with mattresses and bed sheets and pillows. It seems that the ship's commander had assigned the ship's Medical Quarters to the band. We also learned that the ship's name was SS BRAZIL and that there was another ship near by the name of SS ARGENTINA. These ships had been converted from passengers to Troop carrying ships. That evening the Dance Band played for the ship's commander's evening mess. Later we were told that the commander was very pleased with the music the dance band played.

April 1, 1943 the band got up a 5:00 a.m., had breakfast then with instruments in hand walked down the gangplank onto the docks, fell into band formation, waiting for the arrival of the troops. Around 7:00 a.m. the first troops began to arrive and started to walk up the ship's gangplank. While the troops were boarding the ship the band played some marching music. You could see each soldier as he went up the plank, wearing full field gear and carrying a barracks bag. The band played until the last soldier was aboard, and there were many a soldier aboard the ship.

April 2 it was morning when the BRAZIL started to pull away from the dock and headed for the open sea. Soon thereafter the Brazil joined other ships at sea. We were now in a ship's convoy all through the day you could see the other ships joining the convoy.

April 3 second day at sea. Some of the bandsmen are getting sea sick, other soldiers, too. The upper decks are off limits to all enlisted per-



Trombones: L-R: Charles A. Cospier, Jesus G. Sandoval, Unknown, Sulo W. Taloren

sonnel. The officers had been given the upper deck state rooms as their quarters and the enlisted men were not allowed to go to the upper decks, only orderlies and other key personnel. Nearby a dark grey ship, rumors were that it was loaded with WACs. Just rumors. Weather was foggy and rainy. Saw a Navy flying boat fly over.

April 6, the past few days the weather had been a little rough but today it was nice. A destroyer came close to the Brazil and a man on line, carried by a small boat, came aboard the Brazil. Suppose to have left a package and went back to the destroyer the same way. Some of the bandmen are still sea sick.

April 10, the past few days have been real nice. The sea was calm. Today it was windy but sunny. Some friendly bombers flew overhead. Last night we heard some depth charges going off. Rumors were that enemy submarines had been near by. Some of the bandmen are still sea sick.

April 12, still on the Atlantic. Ships all around us. Windy and the sea is a little rough. Some said that a battle ship is ahead of us leading the convoy. Rumors are that we are near the Straits of Gibraltar and that the convoy will be splitting, some ships going to Casablanca and others to Algeria, North Africa.

April 13, our ship and other ships are passing through the Straits of Gibraltar, on our left is Gibraltar, Portugal and Spain. On our right is Tangier, French Morocco. We are now in the Mediterranean Sea. It is calm and beautiful. Finally at 4:00 we arrived at the Port of Oran,

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Clarinets: L-R Jack Galinano, Jenning, Herbert A. Speegle, John McAlister, Ramon Narvaez, Jr.

Algeria, North Africa. The first thing we saw were Arabs wearing Navy barracks bags as pants. Later we learned that they would fill the bag with whatever the GIs would give them. We also learned that another band was aboard, one of the F1 Artillery band. Poor guys, they were way below the decks and most of the troops were sleeping in hammocks. Our sea sick bandsmen were feeling better. Although the trip was free of charge and crowded it wasn't a bad trip. Several hours after we docked we finally left the SS BRAZIL.

April 14 the first day in North Africa. Weather is nice but around 10:00 a.m. it started to get hot. We ate "C" rations for our meals. That night we experienced the cold temperature; again we used our blankets.

April 16 around 5:00 a.m. we moved to Oran and around 10 we were herded into some Box Cars and left Oran. Arrived at the new area around 11:00 p.m. It was pitch dark, smelly and cold. It felt so strange.

April 17 we woke up and as we got out of our pup tents we saw mountains around us. The bandsmen pulled guard duty. Again it felt so strange. We were told to keep an eye on our barracks bags. Some of the soldiers bags had been stolen during the night.

April 9, just got off guard duty and had breakfast. We had our first hot cakes. The field kitchen had been set up and we were eating our first hot meals. That evening just before supper the Mess Sergeant passed out some yellow pills called Aterbrine. It was suppose to prevent a fellow from catching Malaria.

April 20, last night the Yellow horror had struck. It started around 10:00 p.m. and lasted all through the night, troops including the bandmen moved around, trench tools hitting dirt. The Aterbrine had given the troops the GIs. Boy what a night, so many holes dug and filled up.

April 23, the past few days the band has been pulling guard duty. Today we had a two hour hike and then gave a concert.

April 24, this morning the bandmen were taken to the base of the nearby mountains where the road led into the mountains and told to go up the mountains in groups of twos with rifles and live ammo and hide and at a given signal to fire up into the air. An hour or so later as we were sitting in our hidden places we saw a column of troops coming into the winding road down below. We got the signal and we started to fire up into the air. Boy, what a sight. You should have seen those troops scatter and start to climb up the mountains. Their mission, to get the enemy, namely us, the bandmen. Later some of the fellows told us that they had heard bullets fall around them, I sometimes wonder if they also have live ammo but I will never know.

April 26, the band went on a mission then played at the 636 Tank Destroyer Unit. Today is my mother's birthday, she would have been 54 years old.

April 27-May 3, the band played several concerts, pulled guard duty, made hikes with the Reigment, played for retreats, got paid with Francs. Packing and moving out. Destination unknown.

May 4, the band is now at Arzew.

May 5-20 band was to train in Amphibious Training but instead got guard duty, pulled targets at the rifle range, had band rehearsal. Later moved to St. Barbe and assigned guard duty at an Ammo Dump. Saw several air raids toward Oran. On May 7 three soldiers from Co. C drowned during amphibious training. Had several passes to Oran, then told to pack again ready to move again.

May 21, once again the band was herded into box cars and moved out at 10 a.m. for destination unknown. May 22 saw a beautiful water fall, then later stopped at a Water Tank Stop. While waiting for another locomotive we had our first showers under the nozzle of the water tank. The second locomotive finally arrived and hooked onto the train and we were off again. Finally arrived at Rabat (French Morocco), then to an area we later called The Cork Forest. The Cork Forest was an area of trees whose bark was made of cork. The band cleared several areas before being assigned its own area. Finally we set up our tents. What a gloomy place. Viva la France.

May 23-July 25, while stationed at the Cork Forest the band and dance band gave several concerts and played for the Officer's dances. The band played in Rabat, Port Lyautey, for the 1st Battalion guarding the prisoners at a prison camp near Casablanca, 51st Hospital etc. June 8 the band played for General Dawley at Rabat, had our first champagne, more band rehearsals.

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July 2 played for General Langee. Saw the parade by the French on Bastille day in Rabat. It was very colorful. One day at the Cork Forest while having dinner under the cork trees, worms started to fall into our mess kits, looking up we saw worms hanging from silky thread lines, at first we thought they were spiders but no spiders only worms. The place was full of hanging worms. We made a dash for the open space otherwise we would have had a wormy meal. Finally on July 24 we were told to pack again that we were moving out. Unknown to us while at the Cork Forest, the 36th Division was assigned to the 5th Army.

July 26 around 5:30 a.m. the band left the Cork Forest by truck convoy and the bandsmen were guides for the 141st Regiment while on the road. I was posted at Mekness, then I was picked up and later we passed FEZ. FEZ is the African town where the Fez hat is made that the Shriners wear. Then Oujda where we rested, our last stop before we left French Morocco July 27. One July 28 we arrived at St. Cloud, the 29th move between Fort-Aux-Poul and Mostaganem. Back in Algeria.

July 29-Aug. 2. Rested, got paid, cleaned area and went aboard the SS O'HARA for amphibious exercises. Embarkation and Debarcation which lasted from Aug. 3 to Aug. 8. We had to train to go overboard, climb down a net on a landing boat (LCVP) and wade ashore.



Saxophones: L-R Armadno L. Breton, Harry R. Lolenberg, Francis Bedford

Aug. 26-28 went aboard ship. Prior to going over the ship's side onto a LCVP, one of the bandmen got sick and he had to stay in the ship's Medical Quarters, the rest of the bandmen went over the ship's side and landed.

Aug. 31 pay day and Division Review. The band played and paraded the 141st Regiment into Inspection formation. General Eisenhower came by and as he passed by he was standing up in his vehicle. He seems to be bidding us Farewell. That evening we finished packing. We did wonder if it was farewell.

Sept. 1 some of the bandmen went to Oran and boarded the ship. Sept. 2 the rest of the band got aboard the JEFFERSON and spent the first night in the Harbor.

Sept. 3-4 finally the ship pulled out into the Mediterranean Sea, although we still heard rumors about landing in Italy, destination was still unknown. Poker and dice games going on. Lots of George Washingtons, Lincolns and others floating around the games.

Sept. 6-7 sailing along the coast of North Africa. At night the Mediterranean was real calm and a beautiful moonlight up above, just like a moonlight cruise. Sept. 7 around 4 p.m., Italy surrenders. Somewhere near Sicily. Same moonlight night. Heard aircraft in the distance.

INVASION OF ITALY

Sept. 9 the bandmen were awakened at 2:30 a.m. and told to go to the pantry and get coffee and breakfast if any and to get ready to go over the ship's side. The 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and some of the 5th waves had all gone ashore. The night was pitch black. Around 4:30 a.m. the bandmen were told to go over the ship's side, full gear and weapons. Some of the guys tied a couple of rifles and a Bazooka to a rope and as it was being lowered the rope loosened and the weapons fell into the water. We went over the ship's side down the huge net and got into the LCP and took off for shore. It was pitch black but the motorman seems to know where he is going. The boat seems to be going at a slow rate of speed and you could feel the boat going over the water. We asked the motorman how he knew where he was headed, he said "See that little blue light to our right, that's where we are going." Suddenly the motor stopped and the boat started to bounce lightly on the water. We asked the motorman what was wrong. He said he didn't know. Dawn started to break and we could see the Italian coast, some mountains behind it. As it got brighter we saw an aircraft parked on the beach, the motorman said that our Navy had shot it down. Although we were quite away from the shore we could see it parked on the beach. Then we heard a whistling sound overhead, a shell was going over and looking north we saw it hit the bow of a destroyer because smoke came out. The destroyer backed and turned and headed out to sea. It was now clear toward inland yet no signs of the sun, only the dark shade of the mountains toward the East. As

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a British LCVP was passing by, our motorman hailed him and stopped him and asked him to take us ashore. At first the Englishman said no then changed his mind and we transferred to the English LCVP. The Englishman instead of going to the southeast headed northeast. He told us he had to unload the truck there. As we passed a ring of amphibious jeep trucks carrying artillery and personnel, one of their officers told the Englishman to turn back but the Englishman kept going. He said, "I have to land this truck." As we approached the beach, still quite away from it, a Navy man was waving a flag to go back, the Englishman just kept going and finally dropped the boat's gate and we jumped into the water over waist deep and went ashore. Just a few feet from the water line we saw our first American casualty. A rifle was stuck into the sand with a helmet on the butt near the body. A land mine must have killed him because blood had come out of his eye, nose and mouth. We passed him by and that is where we (a bandman named Williams) and I got together and headed east, the rest of the Bandsmen and we got separated. Williams and I left the beach and walked over a small bridge that crossed over a small water ditch and headed through an open field. As we headed east we could hear machine guns firing way up front. Finally we passed a house which seemed to be empty and came to a road which we crossed and entered into a Vinyard. Suddenly we were stopped by a GI. He told us he was a Lt. and wanted to know where we were going. We told him that we had just gotten off the beach and were going to our Headquarters near Altavilla. He told us that Headquarters was in a tobacco factory north of us and pointed the way. Then he said, "Tell General Walker that we are pinned down here and to send me some help." By now we could hear machine gun fire much closer. The sun was out I would say that it was around 10 or 11 a.m. Williams and I went back to the Highway and saw several American Tanks were lined up the Highway. We heard aircraft overhead and guns firing. We got under one of the Tanks. Several minutes later it was clear the planes were gone. Finally we reached the tobacco factory and asked for General Walker. We spoke to General Walker and told him what the Lt. had told us to tell the General. Then we told him we were from the 141st Regiment and we were looking for our Headquarters. One of his officers told us that 141st headquarters was southwest and near the beach. All that afternoon we walked looking for the 141st headquarters, finally just as the sun had set we camped upon a recon that was near the beach, a feminine voice was on the air. We asked the driver who she was because we heard her say something about America. He said it was Axis Sally telling the American people that the 36th Division had been pushed back into the sea. Boy we were still on the beach. Since it had already gotten real dark and the truck driver had told us the 141st was close by we dropped into the sand and made our bed.



*TrumpetsCornet: Top—David G. Hernandez, David R. Kragt, Henry Schraeder.
Bottom—Victor Brandeck, Newton, Paul A. Woodard*

From the time we took off the ship until we got back to the beach, the morning and the day, the weather had been real nice. The meeting and the conversation we had with General Walker was our first and our last. I never saw General Walker thereafter.

Our uniforms were wool, high quarter army shoes, full field pack (pup tent, pegs, rope, blanket, dry socks), trench tool, some toilet paper, rifle and ammo, canteen (w/water, canteen cup, mess kit and helmet). Several days before the landing we were given a prophylactic kit and several condoms. After the landing we used the condoms to hold up our trouser leggings, to make it look like we had combat boots. Later in the Italian campaign the canteen cup came in handy, we heated coffee, etc., the helmet, used it for water to shave, wash socks, etc.

Sept. 10, last night we heard some Navy guns. We got up early and joined the rest of the band. Moved to a new CP area. While walking through the field Sgt. Wilson captured two German soldiers who were hiding in the tall grass. We are now guarding the 141st Regimental headquarters that was on high ground where we could see the sea and ships out in the water. Air raid, several German aircraft flew overhead towards the sea. Another night and more Navy gun firing.

Sept. 11-12 heard that the Regiment has control of a two mile front. We are now eating K rations. Doing guard duty to the Regimental CP. German planes overhead going toward the ships at sea. We can see the ships from here seems like they are three or four miles away. We can hear a radio nearby. Another day is going by. Still on the beach.

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Sept. 13, moving again, suppose to go 20 miles north. I was placed as a guide near the 45th Div. Saw some GI with the Thunderbird insignia. Heard that the Germans are breaking through on the left and right flank of the 45th Division. Ambulance went by with some wounded. Suppose to be one mile from the front, can hear rapid firing up ahead. Night fell, saw a plane fall in flames toward the west. Finally no more 141st vehicles came by so I started to look for the 141st CP, got lost again, finally found the new CP. Heard that German shells had hit the area before I got in.

Sept. 14, doing traffic guiding at the entrance of the CP at the new area. The rest of the bandsmen came and were posted as security guards at different sites surrounding the CP area. Met some British Medics that were nearby. The nights are sure dark. Have to challenge all approaching personnel.

Sept. 15 moved from entrance post to an outside post that was sited near an open field. You could see quite a distance up ahead. Found later it was a melon field. The Germans dropped several shells to the left of us, killed two GIs and wounded two. Later shelled the 133rd area.

Sept. 16 heavy barrage last night toward west. The ships at sea were air raided by the Germans. Dug fox hole. Got some more K rations. Heard that Monty was only 48 hours away. Rumors are that Monty is delaying his arrival to help the Americans. This morning it was the second time that Col. Werner passed by going through the field to the front. He gave the password. Saw him again late that afternoon.

Sept. 17 another night of heavy barrage. Col. Werner came by on his way to the front. Around noon we saw a P-38 up above, started to dive, the pilot had jumped out and you could see his open parachute coming down, straight at the ground. It crashed in a small wooded area. Later some of the bandsmen went and saw it. They said it had dug a deep hole, film and other metal pieces were scattered around.

Sept. 18 last night there wasn't too much firing. Morning came and every thing seems to be quiet. One of the bandsmen, a sgt. who had a BAR asked me to exchange guns with him. I took the BAR. Several hours later I was told to report to a Lt at the CP. When I arrived there was a small group of GIs. I joined them and asked what was going on. They didn't know. Soon a 2nd Lt. came by and thanked us for volunteering, he said that we were going to the front to look for Germans. So we were going to look for Germans, no wonder I was given the BAR. Then two other officers showed up and told the Lt. that the Germans had gone farther north toward Naples, so that ended our mission. Later a bomber fell a short distance away from us. Another day ended.

Sept. 19, moved to an area near Altavilla. Heard that Monty had praised the 3rd Battalion for holding open the gap between the 45th and

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the tenth. Understand that the Germans are digging in near Naples.

Sept. 20-30 the bandmen are still doing guard duty, saw a cemetery where the American dead are being buried. Later moved to where 143rd was. Heard that the 143rd had lost heavily in man power while attacking the near by town and that one of the 143rd bandmen had been wounded. Several times we were alerted to parachutists. Koly (Kolenberg our supply sgt.) finally arrived. Several of the bandmen that were not on guard duty were scheduled for CP missions. Practice for invasion but later it was called off. Had some rain. Later heard we were in reserve.

Oct. 1-8 pay day came but no pay, still on CP guard duty. Rained some, on the 5th we had some barbecue for supper. Some of the bandmen and headquarters personnel were able to get a small cow and the bandmen dug a pit and barbecued the meat. Took a picture of the guys that dug the barbecue pit. All is quiet around this area. We have had several rains.

Oct. 9 a month ago we landed on Italian soil. The first American Division (Texas 36th) to have landed on European soil.

Oct. 10 went to church at Altavilla, took pictures of the church and surroundings. Saw Mt. Vesuvius from this distance. Still on guard duty.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The story of the 141st Infantry Band will continue in an issue in Vol. XI. We regret we are not able to run the entire story in this issue but space is not available.



Ramon Narvaez, Jr.



Generals Have Sorrow Too

*Lem Vannatta, Svc. Co. 143rd
Arp, Texas*

First of all that zero weather in December was sure cold. It was an all time record here in Arp. This story begins in Italy and ends in France.

We begin to drive fast after Rome fell. The army ammo dumps were slow moving so we had to haul ammo from Rome to the front. The highways were good, we didn't mind as the black market trade was good. We truck drivers all had a roving garage sale on our trucks. I even sold a German artillery horse to a local butcher. I had made a daylight run to Rome and stopped at the D.A.O. to turn in my ticket. I noticed a two star General seated in the office. As I started to leave he asked in a quiet manner, "How many trucks do you have?" I replied "Just one, we exceed the load limit all the time." He said "I just came from the Pacific, there you can hardly haul the load limit (5,000 lbs.) due to the soft ground." Later I found out the man was General Patch, the 7th Army Commander in France.

We were relieved and went back to Salerno to train for the Southern France invasion, we always trained for everything. Had the war lasted long enough, we would have taken up training of how to act in a cat house.

We made the invasion August 15, 1944. We moved fast again up there. I would see General Patch in his three star jeep. I saw him eyeing my old beat up truck and me out of uniform a few times. I even saw him a few times with a dirty uniform and needing a shave. We all grew to admire him. He was no Patton, he was our Patch and we were going to win a war with him.

Grave Registration was part of Service Co., so in our spare time all truck drivers had to haul loads of corpses to the large army cemeteries. They never had any kind of memorial at the time of burial. Later, usually when we got a break from the front, we hauled troops, band and chaplain to the cemetery for a memorial service. There was a large such cemetery at Epinol. I hauled a load of troops there for a memorial, we unloaded the troops, then moved the trucks to a rear road to wait, as we waited we saw a three star General drive up near us. He got out with some flowers in hand and went to the grave and kneeled down with his head down a long time. He got up, dried tears away with his handkerchief. The man was General Patch. After he left we looked at the grave and, it was his son's grave. He had been killed in another division.



‘Duney, Sit Down And Tell Me A Story

by Julian (Duney) Philips



Worldwartwoveterans.org

World War II is history and I'm stationed at Ft. Richardson, Alaska, just a few miles north of Anchorage.

I had just replaced the telephone on it's cradle and stood up and reached for my hat.

The caller had been the aide to Lt. Gen. Nathan F. Twining, Commanding General, Alaska Command. He just said, "Duney, the General wishes to see you right away."

By the time the telephone was safely in it's cradle my mind was turning over, trying to recall every little detail that had happened to me for the last month. I could not think of a reason for the Commanding General to call me in.

On the way out of Hdq., I stopped by my boss' office to tell him about the call I had just received. Col. Thomas L. Mosley's remarks were, "Duney, have you been in trouble again?" I answered "Hell no, but when he gets through with me I'll let you know what he wanted."

Col. Mosley and his wife Martha were like parents to Ruby and myself while we were stationed at Ft. Richardson. Someway I struck his fancy. We had many arguments and disagreements about my Special Services program on post and he was always fair and understanding. Once after a heated argument he said "Duney you are my image when I was your age. You curse as loud as I do and if you think you are right you would argue with the devil, but you just don't drink."

On the way to the office of Gen. Twining I was going over in my mind my Alaskan duty. I had arrived in Anchorage the middle of January 1946 and was assigned to the Provost Marshal Section until the Special Services Officer left and I took his job. I couldn't remember having gotten into any disagreements up till then.

When I arrived at the General's office his aide motioned with his thumb to go on in and said, "Duney, he is waiting for you."

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I knocked, the General said, "Come in." I entered, stepped in front of his desk and gave him the best High Ball (salute) that I had. The General spoke, "Duney, take a chair, I would like to go over a few things with you."

By this time my eyes had covered his office. I saw no paper work in his IN or OUT basket. The office was immaculate. The only thing on his desk was a War Department form 66 (an officers qualification card) and I was betting that the damn 66 was mine.

General Twining started off by asking me if I would like a cup of coffee. I answered yes, all the time thinking this couldn't be so bad if he was asking me to have coffee with him.

The aide brings two cups of coffee as the General continues. "Duney, you applied for a Regular Army Commission a while back and went before Maj. Gen. Atkinson's board. All work on this project is complete. Last week the General furnished me with the results, which I've put my endorsement on and have forwarded it on to the "Department of the Army."

He paused to sip his coffee then continued. "Duney, your name was at the top of the Board's list and I concurred with the Board's recommendation. My endorsement should insure you a Regular Army Commission, I'm pleased to say."

I answered, "Thank you Sir." I thought I had been called for a chewing out but instead the "Old Man" was patting me on the back.

The General reaches for the form 66 on his desk as he continues to speak. "Duney, I personally went over the Board's recommendations on each officer's file. Gen. Atkinson and myself found your form 66 to be quite unusual. As you know officers are rated by their superiors every six months or for a shorter period, if one should be transferred. Gen. Atkinson pointed out to me where you had been rated for a one day period. The rating officer rated you as satisfactory for just one day. Army regulations prohibits him from doing this, but he did it."

The General handed me the form 66. It was the first time that I had laid eyes on my own records, that the Department of the Army was keeping on me. "Duney, tell me who this crazy officer was who rated you on 28 Sept. 1944. There must be one hell of a story that happened that day."

I found the item on the Form 66 that the General was referring to. It read, Plat. Comdr./Hdq.Co. 1st.Bn,143rd.Inf. 9-28-44/S/DMF. To enterpret the item it read: Platoon Commander in Headquarters Company 1st Battalion, 143rd Infantry, 9/28/44, is rated satisfactory by Lt. Col. David M. Frazier. I answered, "this officer who rated me is Lt. Col. David M. Frazier from Houston, Texas, a friend of mine. I have known him most of my life." The General answered, "Duney, you don't need friends like that, because today that rating would get you kicked out of the Army. Tell me what happened to you on 28 Sept. 1944."

I turned over in my mind things that had happened in Sept. 1944. There was the incident that I put into a story titled, "Lt. Philips, I'm going to court-martial you for murder", or it could be the one I wrote titled "A Promise I Failed To Keep." Then it hit me, this had to be the day that I called my Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. David M. Frazier, a yellow son-of-a-bitch and he stood and took it."

I started off by saying, "General Twining many things have happened to me since I joined Co. G 143rd. Infantry as a sixteen year old kid back in 1938. Col. Frazier was a 2nd Lt. in that Company."

After entering Federal Service on 25 Nov. 1940, my enlisted service wasn't too good. My mouth seemed to always overload my ass and it kept me in trouble.

During 1941-42, one Capt. Milton Steffen must have seen something good in me. I had been busted from Sgt. to Recruit just before he assumed command of G Co. A short time later he asked my brother, S/Sgt. Malcolm H. Philips why I was a recruit, acting Platoon Guide. He thought he remembered seeing me wearing Sgt. stripes. Malcolm answered, "Capt. my brother has been a Sgt. at least a half dozen times, but he doesn't seem to be able to stay out of trouble. He is not a garrison soldier, but when we go back to the field, he will get his stripes back. I don't worry about him."

It wasn't but a few weeks until Capt. Steffen started pushing me up the ladder. From recruit to private to private first class to corporal and on to Sgt. When my brother went to O.C.S. (Officers Candidate School) I took over the Platoon. Then in the Spring of 1942 he recommended that I also be sent to O.C.S. I graduated from Ft. Benning, Infantry Officers Class #95, on 5 November 1942. I was now supposed to be an officer and a gentleman. But I was still Duney Philips to my friends. My uniforms were better, the pay was better than a recruits pay of twenty one dollars a month with \$4.90 taken out for insurance and another four or five dollars taken out for laundry.

Trouble somehow seemed to stay with me as hard as I tried to stay straight. There always seemed to be someone who wanted to test me or one who would say the wrong thing to me. I couldn't wait to get to Europe so I could go up against Hitler's Superman. I was disappointed when I got orders to the 86th Black Hawk Division at Camp Howze, Texas for my first duty station out of Ft. Benning.

I put in many requests for an overseas assignment so I could lead men into combat instead of training recruits in the states.

No Battalion or Regimental Commander likes to have one of his officers try to leave his command as hard as I did. After about ten months the Regimental C.O. was in a bind and needed an officer who would go to Europe the next day. He asked when I could be ready to leave, I answered, "Now, I need to get to Europe." He told me I would leave in twenty-four hours, that I could take the rest of the day off to get my things ready. I had to clear post, pack and get back to Denton,

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Texas where Ruby was living. My parents would be there to drive her to Houston as she was six months pregnant.

My brother, Malcolm, was with the 3rd Division, as a Platoon Leader in Co. F, 7th Infantry. He had already been wounded once and had been reported as "Missing In Action". After a week behind the German lines he brought his patrol safely back. He wrote to our parents not to believe the Missing In Action reports.

As you can see by my Form 66 I was reassigned to the 36th Division in southern Italy. The Division was just south of Cassino in a town named San Pietro.

The Italian Campaign was rough on the 36th Division. We were trying to learn to fight a good German Army while staying alive.

By May 1944, the rifle companies had already been replaced three times. The winter of 1943-44 took its toll on the Americans and Germans fighting in the mountains. Many men were lost during that period. Those who weren't killed or wounded suffered from frost bite. May and June was a breeze, we found out that we could beat the German Supermen at their own game, "WAR."

Two hundred miles north of Rome, a new Battalion Commander (a West Pointer) fresh from the states made the mistake of asking me during his staff meeting what Capt. I would like to work under from then on. I had wound up at the end of the Rome Drive as Commanding Officer of Co. F, 143rd. Inf. and was under the impression I should have the company even though I was young for a C.O. job. I answered Col. Watkins by saying, "Sir you don't have a S.O.B. in this Battalion that could teach me anything about combat. Why would I want to serve under anyone?" That ended the meeting with the Battalion Commanders. Col. Watkins face turned blood red and without a word he left. He went directly to Regimental Hdq. where he told Col. Paul Adams that he would not have me in his Battalion.

I was moved to the 1st Battalion under Lt. Col. David M. Frazier and landed on the beaches of southern France as a Platoon Leader in Co. C, 143rd Inf.

Lt. Col. Watkins the 2nd Battalion Commander also landed on the French beaches 15 Aug. 1944 with four new Captains from the states for his Company Commanders. They were inexperienced and did not know combat.

After landing on the beach Col. Watkins gave an order to one of his Captains to take his company and knock out a machine gun nest that was holding up the Battalion progress. Being new to combat the Capt. froze and said it would be suicide to expose himself. At that time the Col. ordered the company to follow him, needless to say the Germans cut Col. Watkins down.

Col. Watkins was an inexperienced Battalion Commander with great Company Commanders, trying to lead men into combat. The men they were leading had been in combat and understood how the Germans

would react to most situations they might encounter. The new C.O. thought they were too good to ask a Jr. Officer or Sgt. how the machine gun could be knocked out. This was one of the biggest mistakes the Americans made. Being too proud to ask for help or thinking because of his rank he knew more than anyone else.

From 16 Aug. 1944 on I commanded a Special Platoon in 1st Battalion, 143rd Inf. under Lt. Col. David M. Frazier. My job was to do all of the patrolling for the Battalion and lead most of the big attacks.

It is said that the 36th Division found itself on the Rome Drive. If this was true, we graduated in France because the Germans were no match for the 7th Army. We had the 3rd and 45th Divisions, led by Lt. Gen. Alexander Patch which had to be rated one of the best Armies of the Allies.

We landed on the beautiful beaches of southern France on 15 Aug. 1944. Our opposition was the German 19th Army.

The 7th Army consisted of three of the best American Divisions in the Army and it had an excellent Commanding General, Alexander Patch. His strategy and tactics carried us all to a new high. It was unbelievable the real estate we took.

Four days after the invasion, at San Raphael, I led my men into Draguignan, France, forty miles from the beaches. The fifth day the 1st Bn. 143rd Inf. rested. The forty miles hadn't been easy. We had lost men and equipment. We used the time trying to locate the Germans while the rest of the Battalion cleaned their weapons and checked their equipment.

On the morning of the sixth day in France we loaded our men on tanks and scout cars and headed north, as "Frazier's Task Force". We pushed through every road block the Germans had dropped off as they tried to slow our advance. Many of the Germans did not want to die for Hitler, so accepted surrender and a safe life as a prisoner of war.

When the column stopped at dusk on the sixth day in France we were told we had pushed one hundred miles. A new record for the 36th Division.

Everyday in France was different. On our push north, many times we moved at night. I recall one night where we encountered four road blocks, killing or capturing the Germans who were left to slow the Task Force down. They were hoping that slow-down would allow the members of the German 19th Army to withdraw north.

Early one morning, after a hard nights push, our position was given to higher headquarters. Col. Frazier was told it was impossible for the 1st Bn. to be in that town because it was too far north of the rest of the Division. When Col. Frazier received the radio communications he turned to me and asked what town we were occupying. I had checked each town off on my map as we drove through and I was positive I knew exactly where we were so I told him the name of the town.

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He said he had just reported to Regt. Hdq. and they told him it wasn't possible we were that far north. He turned to me and said "Duney, bring me a Frenchman who can verify the name of the town we are in." I stepped outside and saw a Frenchman coming out of a house across the street. I trotted over and took him by the arm and started to lead him back across the street to Hdqs. He wasn't sure who I was or what I wanted. He tried to pull back, so I said "Pardon" and took a firm grip on his upper arm. He then let me lead him into Hdqs. where the French interpreter asked the man what town we were in. The Frenchman verified that we knew where we were. The Col. sent our location to Regiment and received a reply to hold our position until the rest of the Division could catch up. The men in the Battalion always enjoyed our rest periods no matter how short.

Many times Col. Frazier moved his "Task Force" at night. I recall one morning just at day break, we realized that the American Column had been infiltrated by Germans during the night. The Germans realized their mistake about the time we realized they were in our Column. They thought we were Germans withdrawing north.

Their second mistake was at daylight when they tried to pull their vehicles out of the column. It was a field day because within a few minutes, hundreds of Germans were dead. One of the German vehicles was a large tour bus loaded with soldiers. It pulled into our column just in front of our tanks. The gun on the tank was only about ten feet from the back window of the bus. Not one German soldier left the bus alive. During my combat experiences I had seen a lot of killing, but this was a piece of cake. That mistake cost them many lives.

Grenoble, France fell on 22 Aug. 1944. We had pushed hard since 15 August when we left the beaches of southern France. Army Headquarters realized we were north of the retreating German 19th Army, so it sent the Frazier Task Force southwest to cut off the Germans in the vicinity of Montelimar. The rest of the Division converging on the town.

On 24 Aug. 1944, we headed south and had to pass the city of Valence. Our orders were to take it. My platoon was short of men because of the losses we had suffered since landing in France. We were given the job of leading the attack into Valence. The attack started a short time after dark and we soon realized the Germans didn't intend for us to capture Valence. Machine pistols and M-34 were everywhere we turned. The main part of the German defenses were the 88's and there were two at the end of the road we were attacking down. We were so close to the guns that the concussion nearly blew us off our feet. They were firing blind and the shells always exploded behind us.

S/Sgt. George Rainer was as good a soldier as we had in the Division. He had been in the Special Platoon from the start and had seen more than his share of combat. He yelled so I could hear above the firing

"Duney we won't be able to break through into the town. Look at all those automatic weapons firing, plus those 88's. When they depress their muzzles a little the shells will explose in our area." It was just a few minutes later that Col. Frazier had seen enough, so he sent word up to the column to pull back to our starting area. Later that night we loaded on tanks and scout cars and headed south, not really sure of where we were going.

On 25 Aug. 1944, driving south into the Rhone Valley we held the high ground at the north end of the valley. The engagement was known as the Battle of Montelimar. It was a slaughter. The 36th Division had never been in a situation such as this. It was our time to kill the Germans. They knew we had the upper hand and they were afraid for their lives, no longer the Supermen of days past.

On 29 Aug. 1944, we headed north, taking Leon and continuing our drive, pushing the Germans toward the Voges Mountains and the Rhine River. It was around 20 Sept. 1944 when we started picking up prisoners who kept telling us the Germans were ready to dig in and fight. They were tired of running. Col. Frazier kept my platoon out at night on ambush post, picking up prisoners so our S-2 could interrogate them to find out what the Germans intended to do.

On the night of 23 Sept. 1944, sleet was heavy. My men had patrolled all day and they were dead tired. The S-2 needed a couple of prisoners to see what the Germans were up to. By midnight we handed over the third prisoner and I headed out to find Col. Frazier. I told him that we had delivered three German soldiers to the S-2 that my men were tired and wet. I asked if he would let me pull my men back within our lines so they could get a little rest. He looked me in the eye and said, "Duney, get me one more." This went on for the rest of the night. Around 5:00 am we had captured seven prisoners. All of them gave the same story about the Germans attack the next morning. Around 7:30 am the reports came from Co. A that the attack had started in their area. The C.O. 1st Lt. Ivan M. Kerr, from Waco, Texas kept asking for help because the Germans were in his company area.

My men had received a warm breakfast and I had scattered them into three barns where there was plenty of hay to crawl into. I had just settled the last man in the barn and told them to get some sleep when a runner came from Battalion Hdq. and said the old man wanted to see me. I walked into the building where Col. Frazier had his headquarters as he was having his morning coffee. He started by saying "the Germans have started their attack. By our reports they have hit Co. A pretty hard. Take your men and see if you can help them." At that moment I didn't know what the day would bring, so I jogged toward the barns where my men had just sacked out. As I explained our mission to the men in the platoon, not a question was asked. They knew what their jobs were in this Special Platoon and for the last thirty-nine days the assignments were unbelievable. Somehow, someway we had been able to carry out all of the orders, except the attack on Valence.

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As I started off I said, "Let's go see if we can help Co. A." About fifteen minutes later I started up the hill. I heard the first burp gun and further up the incline the MG-34 opened up to my front. I headed toward the firming at a trot with my men hot on my tail. Not one asked why, or held back. They knew we were at a disadvantage with only twenty two men fighting their way to the top of the hill. About half way up I saw the German column to my front. They had broken through the Co. A line of defense and were heading toward the rear of the battalion.

T/Sgt. Chester Peterson of Omaha, Nebraska was behind me and to my right. He was the first to open fire on a German with a machine pistol, who had turned to fire on our column. Rusty, was to my left rear and he fired next. I saw both Germans fall. We passed at least two squads of Co. A men at the bottom of the hill.

I yelled to Sgt. Peterson to send word to the men of Co. A to tag on to the end of our Platoon, that we were going to the top of the hill to hold the high ground. I fired two shots to my front as a German raised up to see where the firing was coming from. I yelled "Let's go, we are going to the top." Then all hell broke loose. It seemed as though everyone of my men had picked a target and the whole Platoon was firing. We climbed up the hill about a hundred and fifty yards when I saw two Germans moving an MG-34 into position further down the hill and to my left. I hit the ground in the middle of six Co. A men, none of them firing. I sighted in on the machine gun and started to squeeze off my first shot when I heard the machine pistol fire a burst. At that instant my gun was torn from my shoulder as the stock exploded, sending splinters everywhere. I dropped my head onto my M-1 as though I had been hit. Rusty and Pete had seen me turn to fire and both had seen my gun shatter. Both asked at once, "Duney are you hit?" I answered, "I don't believe he hit me and I'm not sure this gun will fire anymore."

Without moving, I asked one of the Co. A men who their commanding officer was and where I could find him. The men all tried to talk at once saying, "He is a new Lt. named Kerr and he took off about thirty minutes ago when the attack first started." Staying still and not raising my head I asked, "Are there any Co. A Sgts. in this area?" I heard a voice say "Lt. Philips, I'm a Sgt. and I have nine men left here in my squad." I answered, "Sgt. I'm going to take my men to the ridge line and fight from there. I believe we can hold our position, but I want on the high ground firing down on them." I continued, "Pete, you and Rusty tell our men and all of Co. A men to follow me up to the top." As we continued up the hill I asked Pete and Rusty to move about five yards to my right and left because I wasn't sure my rifle would fire.

When we came upon Co. A men I yelled for them to get their gear and fall in the column, that we would defend the mountain from the

top. My hearing told me the Germans had stopped firing. The Thompsons and BAR's that I could here were Americans. I hit the ridge line and yelled for Rusty to take five of our men and five Co. A men and check down the hill and to pick up all Co. A men in the area. He would also sweep the woods to our rear to find officers or men from Co. A. I continued, "Pete, you take five of our men and ten of Co. A and head down this ridge line until you get in front of the Germans. Try and stop their attack. There shouldn't be too many to our right, so sweep this side for any stragglers. I'll take what's left and hold this ridge line. Pete you and Rusty get back here when you have cleared your side of the hill. Pick up all of the Battalion men that you see." It only took them a few minutes to pick their men and to move out to clear the hill of Germans.

The men that were left were placed in an all around defensive position, placing Sgts. and Corporals in charge of certain areas. My men were scattered throughout the area to insure that everyone did his job. From time to time we would hear our men fire a few rounds or a German fire his machine pistol. Only twice during the next three hours did Sgt. Peterson get into a fire fight. I could tell how it came out because the enemy weapons stopped firing. Rusty returned to our defensive position about two and a half hours after he left and had picked up about forty-five men and hadn't fired a shot. We placed the men into the defensive position with instructions to dig in and to check their field of fire. Around five o'clock we still had not seen a German on the Ridge Line. I told Sgt. Peterson we would leave the hill in single file with our men scattered throughout the column to keep the Co. A men calm and secure. We needed to get to Battalion Hdq. and report what we had done. It took us only twenty minutes to reach Hdq. We saw no activity around the building and had seen no American outside. As I rounded the corner I saw where the front entrance had been sand-bagged and a water cooled machine gun in position in the front door. There were two men in position behind the machine gun and as I stepped over the sand bags I asked, "Where is Col. Frazier?" A Sgt. just inside the door answered, "Lt. Philips when he sent you out to help Co. A, he pulled back the rest of the Battalion. We were left to wait for you and if you were not back by six-thirty, we would withdraw to our lines." Col. Frazier had left twelve enlisted men to man four water cooled machine guns when he pulled his battalion to the rear. I told the Sgt. to break down his guns and to get his men ready to move out.

I kept turning the morning happenings over in my mind: The German attack had been in the Co. A defensive area, for I had heard no other firing within the Battalion Area. Col. Frazier hadn't sent one man other than my platoon to help Co. A out of a bad situation. He must have felt the men in his battalion were in danger, so he withdrew to the rear. It took about forty minutes for me and my men to get to the

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outpost. I asked where Battalion Hdq. was located and was told it was a short piece down the road. We took off at a fast gate with most of my platoon at the rear of the column with Sgt. Peterson. I instructed the men to keep moving until we were behind our lines and then we would rest. The questions kept running across my mind, "Why did Col. Frazier withdraw, when the German attack only hit Co. A. I'm sure when we broke through their column, they began to withdraw taking their wounded with them. I knew we had wounded or killed quiet a few Germans as we broke through their column and I wasn't sure their commander wouldn't order a counter attack."

As I moved south, I kept wondering what I would say to Col. Frazier when I got to Headquarters. I was mad and hurt to think that this man whom I knew most of my life had let me down. He had left twelve enlisted men, with no officer in charge, to be captured by the Germans if their attack continued and was successful. Every step I made my fury grew, until I was ready to explode.

When I reached Battalion Hdq. I asked the first man I saw where Col. Frazier was. He pointed to a small hill next to the Hdq. Building. There was the Col. talking with his staff. I turned to Sgt. Peterson and said, "get the men fed, have them check their ammunition to see what they need and get them bedded down so they can get some rest." When I finished I turned and started up the small hill. I was angry, hurt and tired but very glad to be alive. My Platoon had been through more than their share of attacks and patrols while in France and they were exhausted.

When Col. Frazier saw me climbing the hill, he turned from his staff and took three or four steps away from the other officers. When he stopped in front of me I raised my voice and screamed, "Why did you pull the Battalion back?" He answered, "Settle down, I withdrew the Battalion because we were being hit by a hard German attack." By now my face was blood red and I was past being mad. I couldn't control myself as I yelled, "Hell, I know the Germans were attacking. We broke through a column hitting Co. A. That was no reason to withdraw our Battalion. I didn't see one German after we broke through their column. They must have pulled back into their own lines. I still don't know why you pulled the Battalion back." The Col. said, "Duney, you are upset, what seems to be wrong?" I took a step back and threw my rifle to the ground. It shattered as I said, "That's what's wrong with me. I've put my ass on the line for you for the last time and I don't intend doing it again for a 'Yellow Son-of-a-Bitch'." His expression never changed as he continued to speak. "Duney, go over to the kitchen and get something to eat, you need rest and you will be OK in the morning."

I turned and left my Commanding Officer knowing I had spoken out of turn by calling him a yellow son-of-a-bitch. A man I had great respect for, but I couldn't help the way I felt. He never answered my question to my satisfaction and could only say "Duney, you are upset."

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General Twining, I was more than upset, I was as mad as I had ever been in my life but I also knew I was wrong.

The next morning I led the Battalion back into the area they had left the day before. My job hadn't changed. We kept leading the big attacks and doing the patrol work for the Battalion.

About a week later, Col. Frazier called me to Hdq. and told me to disband my platoon and send all the men back to their respected companies. When this was completed, I was to get my things together to return to the states for Christmas leave. Col. Frazier even asked me to visit Mrs. Frazier and his children and tell them he was doing fine. One hundred officers and four hundred sixty-six enlisted men would leave 7th Army for Christmas with their families.

Christmas 1944 with my wife and baby daughter whom I had never seen was the greatest thing that had happened to me in a long time.

Gen. Twining, I returned to the 36th Division on 13 March 1945, my birthday, ready to go back into combat. The war's end was in sight.

The General stood and said, "Duney, I knew there had to be one hell of a story that happened on 28 Sept. 1944. You've had a good life up to now and I hope it will be a long one. You've been through a war and have served with honor and integrity. We are pleased to have you on staff here in the Alaskan Command. We shook hands and I took a step back and gave him the best salute I had, he returned the salute and I left his office. I was glad that all he wanted was a story of one day of my life in France.

Years later when the Army changed the Officers and Warrant Officers qualification card to a new card, I was called to Hdq. They told me that my old card was so unusual, with the rating for one day, that if I wanted it I could have it for my personal file. I told the adjutant I would like to have it and maybe someday I would get a chance to stick it where it was supposed to be stuck.

Years passed and I retired as a Lt. Col. in 1961. We returned to Houston and picked up our lives as civilians.

In the spring of 1988, I made a trip to Belton, Texas to visit Brig. Gen. David M. Frazier. I had written an article for the Historical Quarterly and I wanted him to read it before sending a copy to the editor for publication. During our visit he asked me when I was going to write about Docilles, France. I told him I didn't remember anything special happening in Docilles, France that I could write about. He reminded me of the day I had my rifle stock shattered by German bullets. That hit me like a ton of bricks. I shook my head and said, "I've wanted to write that article for years but decided against it for as long as you are alive." Col. Frazier said, "Duney, write it, I would enjoy reading the article."

A few months ago, my friend Gen. Frazier had a stroke and from all reports it didn't sound good. I began thinking about the story he had asked me to write and I felt I had let a friend down. So, I began to write about the incident in Docilles, France, staying up until the wee hours to finish it.

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David, this is the article and I hope you like it. I apologize for my temper and my mouth that day so long ago. You were the best Battalion Commander that I worked under during WWII and I'll always consider you my friend^d



HISTORICAL QUARTERLY VOLUME XI (1991)



We are now accepting renewal subscriptions for VOLUME XI (1991). Keep your set intact by renewing early.

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Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly
As I Recollect:

by Ben F. Wilson, Jr.

Pensione Muller

43 Via Mergellince, Naples, Italy

HEADQUARTERS



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About the first of November, 1943, General Fred L. Walker, commanding general of the 36th Infantry Division called me in and asked if I would like the job of Division Special Services Officer of the 36th Division. I was the Assistant Inspector General of the division, but at the time I was acting liaison officer when the division was in the line. I readily accepted the assignment, which held new challenge for me.

In early January 1944, the division was in the San Angelo, Alife, Piedmont area for a period of rest, re-equipping, and recruiting replacements for training.

General Walker stopped me in the division area and said he would like to have a hotel or pensione in Naples for the purpose of sending tired and deserving officers for a few days of rest. Also for those recuperating from wounds or serious illness. The enlisted men already had an adequate rest center in Caserto, near the huge Royal Palace.

He instructed me to go to the Rome area command, which was just being formed and attempt to secure such a place. I went down to Naples, from Alife, and after some time found the Rome Area Command real estate section, and as it turned out, the head of this section was my old friend, Lt. Col. Ed McCall from the 141st Infantry Regiment. He had commanded a battalion on the Salerno landing.

I stated my mission, and was assured of his full cooperation and assistance; as he said "after all this is my outfit."

We went down via Rome to the waterfront, turned right and started along the beautiful Naples waterfront.

We stopped at two pensiones, each facing the bay of Naples, but both were inadequate for a number of reasons; gloomy, poorly equipped, and no staff.

This turned out to be the Pensione Muller, two floors of a five story building, just across the street from the bay of Naples—it was perfect for our purposes. Clean airy, completely equipped and staffed; the pensione was owned and operated by Sr. Antone Muller and his wife, both of Swiss

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extraction. Sr. Muller spoke perfect English, so this made the arrangement perfect. The pensione was secured and paid for under the Reverse Lend Lease Program.

General Walker was completely pleased with Pensione Muller, after he made a trip to the pensione with Col. Skip Vincent, Chief of Staff, and myself. He immediately wanted the first group of officers to arrive in one week.

This took some doing, but we opened the rest pensione on time. Division G-1 section allotted the spaces to the units; we made arrangements for rations and fuel and were all set to take care of about thirty officers at a time.

We were able to have a young soldier of Italian extraction assigned to the pensione. Anthony J. Brafone, to be translator, make the daily draw of rations, assist the visiting officers and assist in anything that needed to be done. He was very busy young man.

Bill Jary, who was assigned to the Special Service Section for the purpose of publishing the T-Patch, at that time a legal sized sheet, memographed on both sides, worked up several interesting trips around Naples, plus anything interesting and available to do. (Bill Jary stayed as part of the special service section until almost the end of the war.)

The Pensione Muller was such a huge success and of such benefit to the officers that General Walker extended from one to two weeks stay for those who particularly needed more time to recuperate from fatigue and health problems. Lt. Col. Hal Reese, the Division IG stayed two weeks after a serious bout with pneumonia.

The Pensione was ideally located, with a wonderful view of the curving bay of Naples and Mt. Vesuvius rising in the distance. Just above was the famed "orange club", that many will remember.

Sr. Muller cleared out one room for a club room, where he served drinks and where stories and tales flowed freely; his specialty was a "sherry flip."

The food was excellently prepared and Mama Muller always seemed to have a cake on hand for any of the officers with a sweet tooth.

One thing the Mullers were never able to understand was the Americans desire to have a bath daily. This was particularly true for those persons coming from the front lines, where a bath was not possible.

When a bath was desired one would notify Mama Muller and she would place your name on a chart with the time and would then prepare the tub for you—you had thirty minutes.

This was an exciting time. The bay of Naples was always full of ships coming and going. Each night around 10:00 p.m. the German bombers would come over. A lead plane would set a course by the red glow from Mt. Vesuvius, drop a string of white flares, then green flares for the deep zone. When this started, the most beautiful display of fireworks took place, made by tracers from 50mm shells up to bursts from 90mm, all

torching up to the sky over Naples. Soon there would be a terrific clatter of the falling flak on the paved streets of Naples. This is a dangerous time to be out in the open.

It was the custom of those staying at Pensione Muller to go out on the balconies to watch the display.

On one such night, Major Harry B. Kelton, Major Clark C. Wren, Captain John Stafford and myself were doing just that. As the bombs began to come close, there was a mad rush for the stairs. Then around the corner to "Al Recovero," an air shelter cut into solid sand stone cliff itself. (A few years back I visited the Pensione, and the words "Al Recovero" could still be seen dimly painted on the rocks.)

General Walker often made trips to Naples on army matters, and many times would come by the pensione, have a drink with his officers there and possibly dinner too. He always seemed to get a real pleasure from this.

After the war, I am told, he went by to see the Mullers, while on a trip to Italy.

Many little things happened during a war that are no big deal in the overall picture, but to those concerned, the guests, and those of us who worked on these projects, it was a real challenge. Among those helping to make the "Pensione Muller" work was Captain Ted Nykiel (now deceased) and Sgt. Robert A. Rocchio, who now lives in Florida, and Anthony J. Bretone.

I hope there are still some around who have pleasant memories of their short stay in Pensione Muller, during a hard, trying and bitter period after the war.

P.S. This story was written from memory, after forty five years and absolute accuracy is not guaranteed. I would like to hear from any who remember their story in Pensione Muller. I have lost all track of Anthony J. Bretone and would appreciate information about him.



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A Delightful Search

by *Roy Goad*



On August 29, 1944, units of the 1st Bn, 143rd Inf. were a part of Task Force Butler in and around Lonol, France. This was on Hwy 7 some five miles north of Montilemar on the Rhone River.

These units of 1st Bn were ordered south along Hwy 7 towards La Concoure and Montilemar on a mopping up mission.

In the "Fighting 36th Division Pictorial History", pictures along the Montilemar sector are included.

One picture shows a jeep with GI's and a woman in it and several men riding on the trailer. The men on the trailer are German prisoners. Notice the 81mm mortar base plate in the trailer. I cannot identify the man in the rear seat of the jeep beside the woman. I think he was from N.E. Texas.

The driver is Pvt. Jim Boyd Eaves of Fort Worth and his front seat passenger is Cpl. William S. Fleming from Killeen. Both were from the

143rd INFANTRYMEN BROUGHT IN THIS WOMAN WHO HAD BEEN FIGHTING WITH THE GERMANS IN BATTLE FOR LORIOL.



81mm mortar platoon of Co. D 145th from Temple, Texas. Both of these men are now deceased.

But this story is about the woman in the jeep.

Earlier that day, I, as Commanding Officer of Co. D along with some of my men of Co. Hq, were helping other Bn. men that were receiving German POW's and searching them. A group of some 7 to 8 Germans and this woman had been taken and their weapons taken and were awaiting transfer to the rear.

My Co. messenger, Pvt. Otto Koehler of Brooklyn, New York, who was of German ancestry—father and mother of Brooklyn and a grandmother still in the Black Forest region of Southwest Germany—had been close by observing and listening to all that went on.

Koehler came close to me and said, "Captain, the woman is a German nurse and she told the other POWs (in German) that she had a weapon on her body and was going to use it at the first opportunity to shoot her way free." Koehler could understand and speak German fluently.

He and I separated the woman and with another GI proceeded to "field strip" her. First her jacket and shirt came off. Then Koehler told her to drop her pants. Sure enough, she had a small holstered gun taped to the inside of her left upper thigh, next to her "joy box."

It was a distinct pleasure to rip the adhesive tape off her leg to get the gun. It was a 7mm five shot revolver with a fold up trigger and a clip of 5 rounds in the butt of the weapon, all in the imitation leather holster.

I brought the revolver home when I came home on rotation in Feb. 1945. The holster disintegrated some ten years ago. And I have fired it quite a bit as the 25 cal. ammo is easy to get.

So everytime I handle the gun it brings back one especially fond memory of WWII which was my only close body search of a German POW.



DIVISION AMBULANCE PASSES ANOTHER PORTION OF GERMAN WRECKAGE. ENEMY RAN 16-MILE GAUNTLET OF FIRE.

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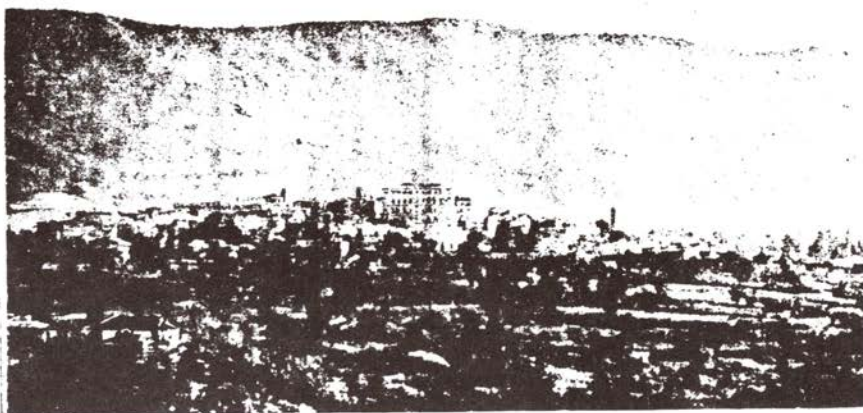
I Left My Friend on Mt. Artemisio

By James M. Estep
Co. E. 142nd Infantry

This story is dedicated to my dear wife, Jean.



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TWO REGIMENTS INFILTRATED AT NIGHT UP ONTO MOUNT ARTEMISIO RIDGE

TO BREAK GERMAN LINE AT VELLETRI

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I will once again try to get this on paper before time runs out. I have started this a thousand times in my mind, but this is the first attempt to get it on paper or anything else for that matter. I joined the 36th just five months after I left home in the West Virginia coals fields. I had thirteen weeks Infantry Replacement Training at Fort McClellan, Ala. with a seven day delay in route to New Port News, Va. First stop in North Africa on to Naples to Mt. Cairo to Co. E. of 142nd just after Rapido fiasco, in plenty of time to see bombing and straffing of the Abbey on Monte Cassino Hill.

My friend, Arthur Kuhl, joined us in March in the Maddaalon area in time for all of the mountain training for the big May offensive. Art was from Ft. Wanye, Ind., married and worked in a printing office. He was several years older than me but had been in the Army a little over a year before joining the 36th. We were assigned as scouts in the same squad. We ate together, slept together, dug in together and griped together. In other words, we were inseparable except when we had any free time he would always stay in the area and write to his wife, which was about all he talked about. As most friends in line companies do, we promised each other that if one of us made it back and the other didn't we would get in contact with the other's family after the war, which I did reluctantly.

Finally, after the eruption of Vesuvius in March, all of the mud, dust and mountain training, we left the Cassino area for Anzio. The 36th was committed latter part of May before Velletri. The 142nd was near Netuno in reserve. On the night of May 30, I think it was, we were loaded on trucks for a twenty mile fast ride around Anzio for some kind of secret mission. Something went wrong and we were returned to the same place we left from hours before. The next night we loaded up again for the same mission. This time we were unloaded and told our objective was to infiltrate the German lines and be on top of Mount Artemisio by dawn without firing a shot if possible. We were told to take rounds out of the chambers of our M-1s to fix our bayonets and use grenades if we met opposition but no small arms fire. That was enough to scare the hell out of a brave soldier much less an eighteen year old coward. It was approximately eleven p.m. when the long climb by 2nd battalion got underway.



TROOPS HURRY TO SECURE WOODED MOUNT ARTEMISIO.

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A few hours later we crossed a highway which someone said was Vallettri-Volmontone highway. All night on our 2000 ft. climb up Mt. Artemisio my mind kept wandering back to home and that I would have been graduating from high school that night with most of my classmates if it hadn't been for Hitler and me being so patriotic. I was proud to serve my country and the 36th. My only regrets were missing my last year of playing sports. Finally, dog-tired, sleepy and hungry, we reached the peak of Artemisio behind Vallettri as it broke dawn. We had accomplished our mission without a shot being fired! It was a big gamble and we won since the Germans couldn't close their lines and cut us off.

Since Art and I were scouts we were the first to the summit. We were told to dig in where we were and after we dug in for one man in each hole to be awake at all times while the other slept and to be alert because the Jerries would hit us with everything they had when they found out we were behind them. The ridge where we were was like saw-teeth with teeth missing here and there. To the right of us was the remains of about one fourth of one side of a wall to some kind of building that I am sure was built in Nero's time. It was made of some kind of mud, plaster, or mortar but not of wood. Where Art and I were dug in was kind of a flat plateau about the size of a little league baseball infield behind us and we dug in right on the rim over a rock cliff approximately twenty to thirty feet high. To our left toward first base with our backs to the infield the ridge dipped several feet to another plateau about the size of a full size

baseball infield with no rock cliff at all in front of their position. At the bottom of this, I was to discover a lifetime later it seemed, a cave which was bigger than a room in an ordinary house. It had a small opening at the top, which came out on top of the plateau at approximately second base behind us. We were scared bad enough that we didn't have to be told a second time to dig in! We dug our hole parallel to the cliff and piled loose dirt right on the edge of the cliff. As the fog began to lift we could see farther and farther through the valley below. Finally, when all the fog lifted we could make out men marching, working, and moving around far in the distance. Two men with binoculars came to have a look and said there were German rear echelon men behind Vallettri. A few minutes later three men came up beside our hole with a water cooled thirty cal. machine gun. It was like "shooting fish in a barrel" for about ten minutes. We could see those Krauts diving in and out of buildings, in ditches, on and off of equipment and bicycles—tracers ricocheting everywhere. Within ten minutes it was all over (we thought) as no one was in sight and nothing was moving. Then at 10 or 10:30 a.m. or whatever time they chose for counter attack, all hell broke loose on top of that mountain. We heard later that in some of our positions the men who were supposed to be awake and on guard had dropped back over the hill to brew coffee and that the Krauts had crawled in the hole with their sleeping buddies with burp guns on them until zero hour. Anyway,

they were all around us. Art and I could hear them under us at the base of the cliff shouting orders, I guess. We had four or five grenades each so we began dropping them down on them, holding them long enough after we pulled the pins, until they exploded in air before hitting the ground. We could hear them screaming in pain, shouting orders, cussing I guess, moaning names—Hans, Fritz, and all kinds of panic. Sooner than we would have liked we ran out of grenades. Art and I were on our knees with my left shoulder against his right, with our rifles on top of the loose dirt and our elbows on the edge of the hole. After what seemed like an eternity we heard less and less commotion under us. When we heard something we would fire a few rounds almost straight down, exposing only our heads. Out of the corner of my right eye I got a glimpse of something traveling end over end toward us. It stopped two feet from me and I could see it was a Potato Masher and thank God a good one.

A dud! In the same instant I got a glimpse of steel helmet ducking back behind the shell of the old building to my right. I told Art to watch the plateau to his left and I would watch the right as they were coming up on each side of us. Every time I would see the helmet around the corner, like a turtle sticking his head out, I would drive him back with my M1. The bullets kept cracking in our ears like bull whips—we all know in the infantry that they don't sing like they do in the "westerns". When they break the sound barrier as they pass your ear they crack, nearly deafening you. I told Art to keep lower down for one from somewhere had zeroed in. He said he didn't see how it could come from in front unless he was in a tree or tower of some kind, and since everyone behind us was supposed to be GIs. These were to be Art's final words. As the bullets began to crack in my ears again I told Art to get down. No answer—no movement—still same position. As I drove the helmet back around the corner again and again I told Art to get down but again no response. I thought "my God, a bullet has come through the soft dirt and hit him in the chest." As I reached to get hold of him his helmet went bouncing over the cliff and I knew he was hit. In panic I lifted him down into the hole. I yelled "Medic, Medic." as everything in Art's head poured out in my hands as the back of his head seemed to explode and all of the brain surgeons in the world could not have helped. Art wore prescription sun glasses and the bullet went through his right eye without knocking off his glasses. He didn't move or moan, never knew what hit him. By then I was a nervous wreck. All I could see were tops of steel helmets all around me and they all seemed to be firing at me. "Have the Germans taken the top and am I all that is left?" I began to imagine everything. Way off in the distance I could hear our Artillery begin to fire and I thought "Boy, this is it for they are going to try to drop it just over the edge of our hole." I began to think of a way to cover Art. I carried a raincoat so I covered him with it and stuck his rifle in the ground in the end of the hole—just like in the movies. Sure enough, the first two or three rounds were short and threw enough dirt in our hole to bury Art

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MEN REST AND GIVE RIFLES FINAL CHECK

and almost lifted me over the cliff. I decided then that I was leaving that hole! I didn't believe I could ever reach the plateau below me although it was only a few yards to my left and down a few feet, but I was going to try. By running, rolling, falling and crawling I made it to the flat below and a room sized cave. I heard talking inside and lo and behold there were five or six GIs talking among themselves about everything but the hell going on outside. To this day I don't know who they were. I stood in the entrance five minutes or so, still trembling, and finally one of them asked me where my buddy was. I told him he was dead and buried just above his head. These were the only words spoken as I then noticed a Kraut coming, dragging one leg and bleeding from several places. His clothing was in shreds and he had neither hat, helmet or weapon. He was licking some kind of powder that was in his hand and cursing every step while heading straight for the cave which was only thirty or forty feet away. I didn't know whether to shoot a wounded, unarmed man or hope someone else made the decision and I remember thinking "they truly are the super race." About this time someone with a carbine and a well-aimed shot settled that thought once and for all! Just about then a GI ran up to the flat and said everyone was to fall back to regroup, that we had been relieved by Rangers and were going for another objective. I was glad to leave that mountain but it sure was hard to leave my friend behind.

I still have a letter received from his widow thanking me for getting in touch with her. Art was reported MIA for several months but was later reported KIA. She was awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart posthumously. She was so glad to learn that Art didn't suffer. She had nightmares of him being burned with flame throwers or crushed by a tank or being blown up. I still wonder to this day whether that sniper was that good of a marksman to shoot the right lens out of Art's glasses or such a poor shot that he was aiming at my left eye and his Art's right one. Why Art and not me? At this stage in the war you knew yours was waiting on you somewhere. Being a dogface you had four things to look forward to: the war being over, being captured, or killed or wounded—and you couldn't have much hope that the war would end at this stage.

Well, we went on to invade southern France after we captured Rome and I had five or six Second Scouts before I got mine in the Vosges in October. Only one of them lasted long enough for me to learn his name. He was Waldo Johnston from Akron, Ohio. I still don't know if he made it. If anyone knows, please let me know. We got caught in an ambush and he had both legs riddled by machine gun. The entire weapons platoon was captured with many killed or wounded. I dragged him down in a little ravine out of the cross fire. He was bleeding profusely. I couldn't report his location until the next day. Why him and not me?

I wonder if that is the same "reaper" that wakes you out of a sound sleep at night and keeps you uptight all of the time—always on guard so you can't relax because you're always waiting for him to appear out of the shadows. You know he is out there somewhere with the rest of yours!

I have been Ohio Buckeye for the past thirty-five years and am now a retired rural mail carrier.



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Our Bird Doggers . . .	'We gotta bring 'em back into the fold'
	

How The T-Patch Came To Be

*by Richard M. Burrage
143rd Infantry*



Worldwarveterans.org

Most of the former members of the 36th Infantry Division who served during World War II and post World War II have little idea as to how the "T" superimposed on an arrowhead became the shoulder insignia of the Division. Most know that the "T" stood for Texas and the Arrowhead represented to State of Oklahoma. It was common knowledge that when the 36th Infantry Division was formed at Camp Bowie in 1917 on the western outskirts of Fort Worth, Texas, it was formed from the National Guard units from the States of Texas and Oklahoma. When an individual joined the 36th Infantry Division after World War I and during World War II, he was given a supply of 'T-Patch' shoulder insignias at the time he went through the supply issue line in his company or battery. Most imagined the members joining the Division in 1917 and 1918 had the same experience. Not so! I am going to tell you how the 36th Infantry Division acquired its shoulder insignia.

For beginners, the 36th Infantry Division members never did wear the 'T-Patch' during their training and combat during World War I. Neither did any other American Expeditionary Force (AEF) member during World War I. The only exception happened when the 81st Infantry Division arrived in the training area in France. This was a National Army Division rather than a National Guard Division. It was known in the States as the WILDCAT Division but their nickname was later changed to the STONEWALL Division. The 81st Infantry Division was organized from draftees and volunteers from North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida and Puerto Rico. As was the custom, General Pershing, CINC of the AEF, visited the newly arrived division and noticed they had a patch on the left shoulder of each member. This patch had a representation of a wildcat. General Pershing advised the commander, Major General Charles J. Bailey that the patches would be removed that day and stay off! As a result, no American soldier in the AEF wore a shoulder insignia during combat during World War I.

A couple of months before the Armistice on November 11, 1918, just after the WILDCAT episode, General Pershing and his staff realized that with the numbers of American troops in France to be moved after the war ended, there should be some means of readily identifying the Division to which an American soldier was assigned. He recanted on his rule and permitted the 81st Infantry Division to keep their WILDCAT patches and ordered that each Division submit a sketch of a shoulder insignia to be worn on the left shoulder of all Division members' outer garments.

At the time of the Armistice, the 36th Infantry Division was in a training area in the TRIAUCOURT-BAR-LE-DUC area, having been recently relieved from the front lines. Prior to leaving that area, the Division received a supply of 'T-Patches' from the AEF Quartermaster Depot which were to be placed on the left shoulder of the outer garments of the members of the Division.

According to conversations I had in 1962 with R. Wright Armstrong, I learned how the 'T-Patch' was born in World War I. Mr. Armstrong and I were planning the dedication of the JOHN A. HULEN NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY IN HOUSTON. Armstrong was an enlisted man in Company G 142nd Infantry Regiment during World War I. He was later commissioned as an officer and was a close confidant of General Hulen. In fact, he worked after World War I for General Hulen in the railroad business. He succeeded General Hulen as President of the railroad when General Hulen retired. As Mr. Armstrong told me, a committee was selected from Division members to draw up a recommended sketch of a shoulder insignia for the Division. The sketch recommended to the Division Commander, Major General William (Billy) R. Smith, was of a shield with a star in the middle, surrounded by a wreath of bluebonnets and mistletoe, the State Flowers of Texas and Oklahoma, respectively. The Arabic numbers "36" were placed in the middle of the star. The final sketch was amended to replace the star with the bust of an Indian to recognize the strong membership of Sooners, especially Indians, in the Division. As the story goes, the artist about that time was transferred to the nearby 2nd Infantry Division to assist in their insignia planning. The insignia submitted to AEF Headquarters by the 36th Infantry Division was rejected on the grounds that an earlier submission by the 2nd Infantry Division had an Indian and a star on their recently approved insignia and this would be a duplication. After some grumbling and name-calling, the committee submitted another recommendation which was accepted.

The approved insignia consisted of a khaki T on a cobalt-blue arrowhead superimposed on a khaki disk. The disk had a diameter of two and one half inches. For woolen garments, the T was olive drab on the cobalt blue T superimposed on a woolen olive drab disk of the same size as the khaki disk.

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The insignia remained unchanged between World War I and World War II. After mobilization, a slight modification was made in the insignia. The background disk was removed, the arrowhead was slimmed down and the T was changed to olive drab. This permitted the same insignia to be used on all uniforms authorized the insignia.

During the Viet Nam war years, subdued insignia was initiated. This was for both shoulder insignia, as well as rank and the U.S. Army Strip over the pocket. The subdued 'T-Patch' was black with an olive-drab T. After Viet Nam, subdued insignia was no longer authorized. So today, the only authorized shoulder insignia for the 36th Infantry Division troops is the cobalt-blue arrowhead with a superimposed T in olive drab color.

Now that you know the story of the 'T-Patch', go out and make some bets and win!

In another story, I will tell you about how the 36th Infantry Division almost became the PANTHER Division with a motto of "We'll do it in spite of hell!"

If you want to read more about the 36th Infantry Division in World War I, I suggest you read "MY EXPERIENCES IN THE WORLD WAR," by General John J. Pershing (2 volumes), "THE DOUGHBOYS," by Laurence Stallings, or "PANTHERS TO ARROWHEADS," by Lonnie J. White.



"Damn fine road, men!"

Fighting 36th Historical Quarterly
San Pietro Memories

By Lee Fletcher
Co. I, 143rd Inf.

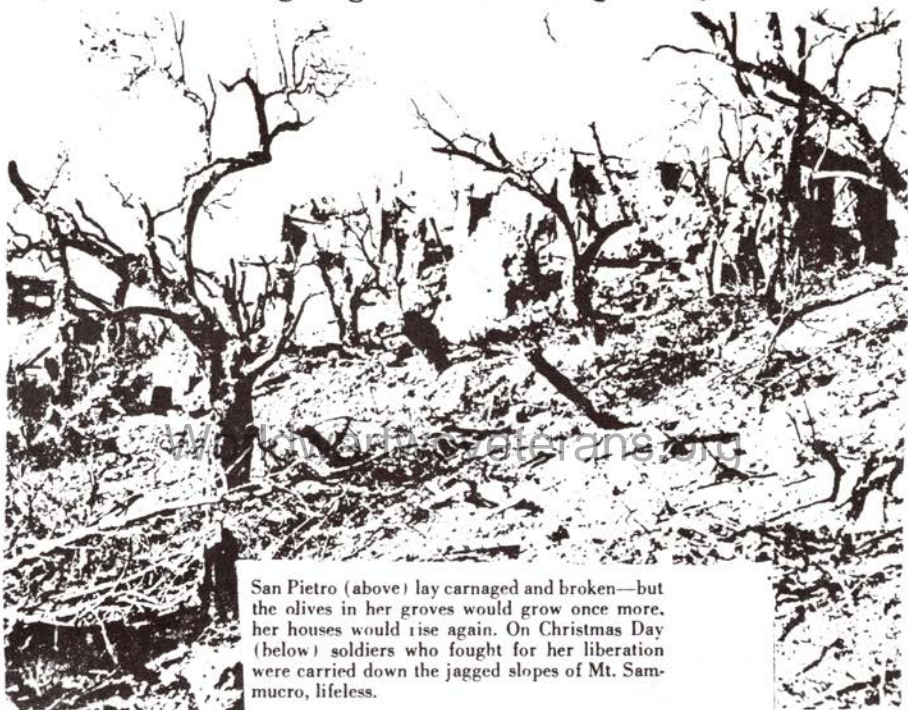


Photograph of the ruined Italian village of San Pietro Infine taken on February 18, 1944 after the fighting for its possession was over (US Army).

**“... THE BATTLE PASSED OVER
AND BEYOND . . . WESTWARD”**

On 15 November 1943, the 36th Division pulled up tents and left the apple orchard outside of Naples. We loaded onto trucks for the ride near the front line, got as close as the drivers could take us, and began climbing one of the tallest mountains I had ever seen. The trail was narrow, slippery, very rocky and it was raining at the time. I was the third platoon Bazooka man and carrying this weapon was quite a chore since the climb was made during the night. Leonard F. “Monk” Gadzinski was my ammunition carrier and it was not too pleasant for him either. We finally reached a clearing near the top and took a break. It was raining hard now. To make matters worse, there were bodies scattered all over the clearing.

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San Pietro (above) lay carnaged and broken—but the olives in her groves would grow once more, her houses would rise again. On Christmas Day (below) soldiers who fought for her liberation were carried down the jagged slopes of Mt. Samucro, lifeless.



When daylight was almost upon us we took cover in the brush and vines. We stayed hidden all day and when it was dark enough we took off again. In the early morning hours we moved into the area where the 3rd Division had vacated earlier and relieved them. It rained for the next 4 or 5 days and the foxholes were full of water. A mule had been left on top of this mountain and had been wounded by artillery fire; I will never forget what a pitiful sight it was. Its bladder had come out of the rectum and was almost hanging on the ground. I was told someone led it away and put it out of its misery.

We stayed in this area for several days and were pulled back across a valley to take up new positions. Some of the men had pitched their pup tents. Later on we received one of the worst shellings I ever experienced up to that time. Our platoon leader, Lt. Madden, was killed as were several men from the company. The wounded were evacuated.



DOUGHBOYS HELP AID MEN CARRY A WOUNDED COMRADE DOWN THE TREACHEROUS TRAIL ON MOUNT MAGGIORE

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**"SIXTEEN TANKS WENT DOWN THIS ROAD
... OF THESE—FOUR RETURNED."**

We immediately left this area to a position back of a mountain where we were protected from artillery fire.

In early December 1943 we attacked San Pietro and were stopped before we got very far. This was a daylight attack. We lost a number of good men killed or wounded. Some of those killed were the Company Commander, 1st Lt. William J. Langston, who was severely wounded and died the next day; 2nd Lt. David R. Fields, who took over the company, was also wounded; and 2nd Lt. Joseph A. Madeo who was killed during this time. A number of soldiers were wounded and killed during the next 10 days of fighting.

The first man I saw killed was PFC Anthony Mazzie from New Kensington, PA. He was killed by a sniper at the base of Mont Sammucaro (Hill 1205). PFC Joseph M. Flaherty from Baltimore, MD was killed by artillery fire—there was a wound to his forehead that looked like a perfect "T". He was in a sitting position, propped up against the rock terrace.

During the second attack, 15 December 1943, my squad was attacking along the base of Hill 1205. It was an open area with huge boulders scattered about. I was moving forward when I heard a zing go past my ear, then a second one, and at the third sound I realized a German sniper was firing at me. I immediately took cover behind the boulders. Within a few minutes the German artillery began firing at us and this lasted for about 20 minutes. It was decided that we set up a defense in this area using the rock terraces for cover. I occupied the last foxhole at the base of Hill 1205.

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Our Air Force was strafing the area of Cassino during this time. There were at least 4 fighter planes involved in this action. The planes made their attack and returned over our area. One plane still had a bomb hanging from its wing. The bomb came loose several hundred feet from our positions and the explosion violently shook the area. None was injured.

The enemy counter-attacked several nights later and at that time our company had only a handful of soldiers left. The attack took place to my right. A German machine gunner was attempting to get to our rear. He would fire a burst and then move. We were firing back with everything we had. I had a BAR gunner in the hole next to me and he was firing his weapon to capacity. Below us was the highway near the S turn in the road. Someone in that area must have seen this machine gun fire because they suddenly opened up with a 50 caliber and I could hear the bullets cracking as they passed overhead. The enemy machine gun ceased firing suddenly after that.

San Pietro was finally taken on 17 December 1943 and the 36th Division was replaced by the 34th Division at the end of December.

On Christmas Day 1943, I was ordered to take charge of a group to return to the battlefield to recover the dead for the Graves Registration Section. We recovered all of I Company's dead plus others. Two men we recovered stand out vividly in my mind today: M.D. Carroll and H.F. (Rocky) Carpenter. They were found on a flat terrace within 6 feet of each other. It was stated that one of our own mortar shells fell short of the target and killed these men. Carpenter had both legs and one arm blown off; his intestines had gushed into a pile and he had a hole in front of his right ear. Carroll was badly torn up by shrapnel. We had to place Carpenter's remains in a mattress cover; not a pleasant thing to do. We returned to the Company later that day and, being Christmas day, the menu consisted of turkey with all the trimmings. I was in no mood to eat after what we had done that Christmas day in 1943. A couple of weeks later we moved to San Angelo D'Alife which is the area of the Rapido River.



The Man With The Look Of An Eagle

(Colonel Oran Stovall, Bowie, Texas) by Sam F. Kibbey

Some men are builders. In whatever endeavor they are engaged they are moulders of how events end. They are creative in the sense that the stamp of their character takes circumstances and constructs from those circumstances a fact, a happening, and—most often—a victory.

He is a man with the look of an eagle. The blue eyes were piercing once but laughter could dance in those eyes, tears could well therein. That was when he thought of his family in Bowie, Texas; or maybe the enlisted man from Michigan who breathed his last somewhere South of Rome. At such times he may have cursed. Even, those with religion curse when neither the love of God nor a good vocabulary can assuage sudden grief.

He was really a young man then, this man with the look of an eagle. It was 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945. The span of World War II was an eternity of its own. The look of the eagle about the man was sharp then. It glistened like the silver eagle on his dress uniform. This one was a leader. The face was a handsome one. Colonel Oran Stovall always had a wholesome face. Cragginess can be beautiful when it reflects honor, integrity and fidelity.

Over thirty years have passed. The Colonel still has the look of an eagle. The shoulders are stooped. The colonel doesn't like that: it does violence to military bearing. (Age is no respecter of Army Colonels).

There is still in this topsy-turvy world a love that transcends self. Though often blurred by the cameras of man's chicanery, we sometimes see the indelible photograph of one person in our memory who lives the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, who loves so fully that he does not just share, he gives fully of himself.

With age some lights burn low but the flame is still there. You catch a glint and then the softness of love and the resilience of high purpose in the eyes of the man with the look of an eagle.

The eyes are said to be the windows of the soul. Some eyes bring sunlight to other lives, casting rays of hope and charity and love. The greatest bird Colonel I know is the man with the look of an eagle.

by Sam F. Kibbey

K-143rd



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